

George Gibb.

From the

George Gibb.

From the

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THOUGHTS

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ON

MODERN POLITICS.

Ye Sons of Mercy, still pursue *your work*,
Drag forth the legal monsters into light;
Wrench from their hands oppression's iron rod,
And bid the cruel feel the pains they give.

————— In this rank age,
How glorious were the day that saw this broke,
And ev'ry man within the reach of right.

THOMSON.

L O N D O N,

Sold by BURTON, Newington Causeway.

M DCC XCHII.

IN PRODUCTION



The University of Washington
has the honor to acknowledge
the receipt of your letter
of the 10th inst. and in reply
to inform you that the
same has been forwarded
to the proper authorities
for their consideration.
Very respectfully,
The President

INTRODUCTION.

THE Abolition of the Slave Trade, that grand cause of humanity, which hath lately engaged, and still merits the attention of the Nation, remains yet in doubtful suspense; owing to one branch of the Legislature who require farther evidence upon the subject. Every prudent attempt, therefore, to fix the Public mind to an object of such magnitude and importance, cannot be unworthy of the man or Christian, who is under so many ties to approve himself a lover of his kind, and a citizen of the world.

Tho' several productions have already appeared on this subject, and this, of course, may be the less acceptable to those who are gratified only with novelty; yet, while the trade in question is still authorised, there is a call, and room to urge our fellow subjects to continue their exertions for its immediate and entire suppression. This alone can supercede the propriety, or even necessity of such attempts, would we prevent the unhappy consequences of such a traffic with respect to ourselves. So much, however, are the bulk of mankind engrossed with their own immediate concerns, that they find little time, and still less inclination to attend to the interests of those whom they have never seen, and whom prejudice hath perhaps taught them to consider as a degraded race of beings, formed merely for servitude; and fit only to be employed in providing others with the luxuries of life. Hence, such need of repeated admonition on the subject.

Tho' several have of late done excellently, in pleading the common cause of humanity, yet there is room; and to the disgrace of Britons and professing Christians, but too much occasion still to urge the important plea: And even tho' this inhuman commerce should be happily abolished, while Colonial slavery is sanctioned by law, and continued within the precincts of the British empire, our humanity may find abundant scope, and should call forth every constitutional effort to ascertain its gradual but entire abolition. It is good, saith a sacred writer, to be zealously affected in a good thing; but our zeal in so good a cause seems to prove like a morning cloud, and an early dew that soon evaporate and disappear: while objects of far less consequence not seldom engage our attention, and excite to the most active and persevering exertions. Where our own private interests are not intimately concerned, our hearts too often resemble flint, which tho' it emits fire by collision with steel, yet remains cold and hard as before. But tho' well-designed attempts to blow up the latent sparks of humanity and compassion, should unhappily fail of producing their desired effect, they will not however be forgot by the great Author of our nature, who regards all his works, nor lose their reward. Men may cease to plead their cause, but it is hoped God will not, who can, and doubtless will, when it seemeth him good, restore their captivity, as he does the exhausted clouds.

Iniquity abounds, and almost all ranks proclaim their sin as Sodom, and hide it not. Do not our national depravity and guilt appear of late to be rapid in their increase; while, alas! wrath is hereby treasured up against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God—a day which may not be so remote as we are apt to imagine? In our atmosphere dark clouds seem fast gathering, which portend an impending storm, to which God and not
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man can say; Hitherto shalt thou come and no farther, and here shall all thy violence be stayed: for distress and misery are the just reward of guilt, and pursue it as the shadow does the body. It nearly concerns every subject, to exert himself in his place, to promote reformation of manners, and effectuate the discontinuance of such measures and practices as seem to threaten our national peace and prosperity. Every Christian, acting in character, will lay this to heart, and importune the continued favour of Heaven, that our tranquility may be lengthened out; contributing at the same time to this important object, by every eligible mean in his power. As mankind subsist not in society but in the present state, public or national sins can receive due punishment only here; whence we may conclude, that tho' the Judge of all the earth may long exercise forbearance towards a guilty people, which is abundantly verified in our own experience, he will not, however, suffer them to pass always unpunished in this world. May the God of heaven convince us, that while our sins and infidelity abound, his judgments cannot slumber, or be eventually warded off; and that no success or prosperity can justify our self-confidence and carnal security!

Among the many things which serve to accumulate our public guilt, and, of course, to endanger our national peace and felicity, the deep and criminal hand we have so long had, and still wish to have, in the barbarous traffic of our fellow creatures, is none of the least; however few regard it in this serious light. The great Governor among the nations may permit a variety of causes to concur in his Providence, in forwarding these very events, by which he means to punish our criminal conduct in this and other instances; and our pertinacious efforts to hold fast a branch of commerce, replete with disgrace and guilt, and that in the face of remonstrance and conviction, seems to forebode no good to these lands.

The decision of the House of Commons, last session of Parliament, respecting the Slave trade, fully authorises us in reprobating it, and the measures employed to support it, in the most pointed terms; and at the same time justifies our perseverance in demanding its speedy and total suppression, independent of the moral necessity of the measure. Can we but regret, that they should give, at least a great majority of the House, their suffrage and sanction to the continuance of this commerce for a certain period; while they had, almost with the same breath, unanimously condemned it, as *inhuman, cruel, unjust*, &c. Is not this saying upon the matter, to all who have presented petitions, and publicly expressed their wishes on the subject, Your wishes and prayers shall be granted, only when so many years have elapsed: meantime it is judicially determined to support a system, seen and owned to be fraught with oppression, cruelty, injustice and murder, with all their kindred train of evils, in an increasing measure!! But, however apt both the multitude and our rulers may be to forget the case of our poor African brethren, these still to hold fast this system of iniquity, on account of its sordid emolument, and those to grow remiss in their applications to them for redress of their grievances; yet we gladly hope the time to favour them may not be far distant,—that the Lord of the whole earth, the Father of all, may be now saying concerning them, as he once did concerning his oppressed people, “ I have surely seen
 “ the affliction of my people, and have heard their
 “ cry and their groaning, by reason of their task-
 “ masters: for I know their sorrows—And I am
 “ come down to deliver them out of the hand of the
 “ Egyptians—Behold their cry is come unto me:
 “ and I have also seen the oppression wherewith the
 “ Egyptians oppress them”†.

One is tempted to think, there must be something
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† Exod. 3. Acts 7. 24.

egregiously defective in any government that can connive at, or sanction in any of its subjects, or in any part of its dependencies, such evils as attend this traffic in all its stages. We can scarce suppose that the spirit which patronises Slavery abroad, can be very friendly to reform at home, or those who abet its cause. Such as desire this, on constitutional or liberal principles, cannot surely be indifferent to the continuance of Slavery, with its attendant evils, in any part of our dominions. Those, therefore who associate for the purposes of internal reform, acting consistently, and approving themselves worthy of the blessings they at present enjoy as British subjects, and farther seek to obtain, must be disposed to embrace every opportunity, presented in Providence, of extending these to their fellow men; and particularly to our African brethren, who have so long groaned under tyranny and oppression in their most dreadful and degrading form. Necessary as internal reform in some things may be, we are indeed unworthy to obtain it, could we suffer a traffic still to subsist among us, without due exertions on our part to prevent it, for the sake of enriching a few unfeeling, interested individuals,---a traffic which spreads terror and desolation, bloodshed and slaughter over so great a part of the inhabited earth; --- nay more, would discover such dispositions as, in the nature of things, must make it impossible for us to enjoy it, if obtained. Many pretend to patriotism, who would confine its exercise within very narrow bounds, beyond which they can see nothing entitled to their love, praise or benevolence. But the true patriot views himself as a citizen of the world at large, and all mankind as his brethren; whence he ardently wishes for the happiness of the whole human race, to promote which he is eager to embrace every opportunity and eligible mean, tho' to the prejudice of his own interest as an individual. Such patriotism Christianity alone grafts on the truest principles, and enforces

enforces by the properest motives; and where this is discarded, it is a question if true patriotism can subsist.

The present political ferment, which hath been apprehended to menace the tranquility of the State, and sap the pillars of the Throne itself, may perhaps be justly viewed, without incurring the charge of fanaticism, as permitted by Heaven to punish the deep concern we have so long had in the trade in question, and our strange obstinacy in refusing to let it go, when Providence is visibly pleading with us and other nations on account of it; as may be seen in the alarming state of St. Domingo for some time past; would men but open their eyes to view it, and firmly believe that a superintending Providence regulates the affairs of mortals; and sometimes recompences the workers of iniquity. Did our Legislature lately, upon the remonstrance and earnest intreaty of so respectable a part of the Community, put a period to this system of iniquity, with all the horrid evils to which it gives birth, from a just abhorrence of these, and a laudable sense of justice and equity, we may venture to say, that this would happily tend to ward off deserved judgments; to add lustre and stability to the Throne; and secure the continuance of our national peace and prosperity. They that walk uprightly walk surely, and honestly, or integrity of conduct, will eventually be found the best policy; both which maxims apply equally to large communities, and to individuals. But too many, like the dog in the fable, lose the substance, in their eager attempts to grasp at the shadow. Whatever be the event of present struggles at home and abroad, or the blame individuals may incur, the Lord will appear to be just when he speaketh, and clear when he judgeth.

After expressing, no longer since than last year, in so public a manner, such sentiments and resolutions
respecting

respecting the nature and effects of the Slave trade, could one imagine the zeal of the nation in so good a cause, would so soon abate, or become apparently extinct? It is indeed no easy matter to bring the multitude to unite in the cause of virtue and humanity, and still more so to secure their persevering efforts. But can the nature of things, or the judgment of God, and an enlightened conscience respecting them, vary with the lapse of time, or with the impressions they produce on our minds? Verily not: for truth and justice, with all their claims, like their Divine author, are the same yesterday, to-day and for ever: and out of our own mouth shall he therefore judge us. Whatever the guilt contracted, in consequence of this traffic, or any other part of our conduct, may be, as there is yet at least a peradventure the Lord may be gracious to these lands, let us not fail to lay hold of every eligible mean that may tend to avert his merited wrath;—let us not fail to consider the situation, and plead the cause of the injured and oppressed, till redress is obtained, that their cry may not still rise up to Heaven against us: for the Lord is a God of judgment, and by him actions are weighed. Let such as practise this traffic, for the sake of private gain, and those who defend it, from its supposed utility to the State, bear in mind that riches so acquired shall not profit in the day of wrath,---that ill-gotten wealth will one time prove a terror and a burden to the owner;—let them not forget, that the solemn period is just at hand, when the gain or wages of unrighteousness shall be seen and felt as the price of an Aceldama, a field of blood: And who would cast such a price into the Treasury, or deposit it in his private coffer? To Yuch applies what the apostle James saith of those rich men, who fraudulently keep back the hire of the labourers that cultivate and reap their fields, whose cries enter into the ears of the Lord; “Weep and howl for the miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are
“ corrupted

“ corrupted—Your gold and silver is cankered; and
 “ the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and
 “ shall eat your flesh as it were fire: ye have heaped
 “ treasure together for the last days.”

The following Thoughts on Modern Politics, as comprehensive of the system of African slavery, (which are partly original, and partly selected), are humbly meant to serve the cause of humanity, justice and religion, the last of which, however essential to human happiness, cannot prosper, while the concerns of the two first are either overlooked or obstructed. Hence the friends and advocates of slavery, who are in effect the enemies of true liberty, may be justly viewed as the enemies of religion, and, of course, as the enemies both of God and man. Wisdom however is justified of her children, whose conduct will ever reflect honour on the principles by which they are actuated, and the cause in which they embark.

With regard to the political contests of the day, we can scarce form a better wish for our Country, than that our Rulers may be directed, in the present critical conjuncture, to adopt and observe such measures as may be best calculated to ascertain and promote a good understanding with foreign Powers, and good order, prosperity and subordination in the State; and that subjects may be induced to live quiet and peaceable lives under them in all godliness and honesty. This may be attained without attempting to overturn the radical form of our Constitution, could any be found mad enough to desire this;—for while we wish, or ought to wish, other nations success in their attempts to renovate their own, so far as this may conduce to human happiness; let us bless Heaven that we are not yet under the disagreeable necessity of copying their example. What prudent person would propose to demolish an ancient and stately fabric, in which he had long lived with ease and pleasure,

sure, in order to rear a new one, while a few slight repairs, which the unavoidable effects of time make necessary, are sufficient to render it both commodious, strong and graceful? But, pursuing the similitude, necessary repairs, too long neglected, may endanger the ruin of the whole edifice. The friends and abettors, therefore, of those measures, which, however openly they are often practised, cannot endure the light, or bear a cool and dispassionate examination, are in effect the enemies of their King and Country, and, persisting in such conduct, may drive matters to such extremities as we reprobate in a neighbouring kingdom. Similar causes may be apprehended to produce like effects, if left to their native operation; and these effects, at a certain stage, may admit neither of effectual opposition nor restraint, and may prove alike pernicious to those who have had an active hand in producing them, and to those who have exerted themselves to prevent them, by urging a timely reformation; with this material difference, that the latter will have the satisfaction to reflect, that they exerted themselves to prevent the evils the obstinacy of their opponents had accelerated. Such then as oppose reform, from whatever motives, should they succeed in their opposition, will sooner or later find they are cherishing, in existing abuses, a viper that will one time or other sting even themselves, or their children to the heart. If the continued peace and prosperity of our Country do not weigh with them, this should have its weight, at least with the more self-interested among them.

But, interesting as reform may be, the goodness of the end proposed will not, however, sanction the use of improper means, in order to attain it: for we must not do evil that good may come. Tumults of every kind are to be dreaded as a pest in the state; for seldom, if ever, can they be productive of real good, and no worthy subject, or good Christian will give them the least countenance. A licentious or
disorderly

disorderly spirit, prevailing among the lower classes of mankind, is the very bane of Society; and instead of promising a beneficial, or permanent reform, marks a people ripe for ruin, and paves the way for it. The Apostolic direction applies here, Let all things be done decently and in order. As laws without liberty become an engine of tyranny and oppression: so liberty without laws, were such a thing possible, or when laws cease to operate, must degenerate into licentiousness. Of the two, the former is more tolerable, were it not that the latter will speedily effectuate either its own destruction or cure. The obligations on rulers and subjects, tho' distinct in themselves, are of a reciprocal nature, and the observance of the duties resulting from them hath a mutual and happy influence. What the Apostle saith of the relative duties of parents and children applies in this case; "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right: And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath." Tho' the failure of duty on one side, will not justify the neglect of it on the other; yet, such is the depravity of human nature, that the former too commonly produces the latter.

The Reader who feels himself interested in the important transactions at present going on in the world, will not be disobliged at such strictures here, and in the following pages, as these naturally suggested. Tho' they may indeed, at first sight, seem distinct from the main object proposed, and first intended, in this publication; yet is it conceived, that very little reflexion will serve to shew, they are not foreign to it: for these things that make revolutions, or reform in states necessary, originate from the very same principle that cherishes slavery in the grossest sense, or is the spring and soul of African thralldom. The success of the former, so far as the best interests of mankind are concerned, must surely have a happy influence on the latter, and is therefore to be devoutly

voutly wished by every one worthy of the Christian name, and the rights of citizens.—Is it possible to wish well to the success of Christianity in the world, and yet remain unconcerned at these grand events which Providence seems to employ, with apparent view, ultimately, to promote its spread and influence? Without doubt, whatever tends to banish ignorance and religious bigotry from among mankind, and to dissolve the chains which tyranny and oppression have for ages been forging and wreathing about their neck, must at the same time have a happy tendency to promote the influence of a religion, the precepts of which are pure and peaceable, its doctrines clear, heavenly and consolatory, its rites and observances, an easy yoke—a rational service; and its leading law, love to God, and to all our fellow men.

How far the Most High may mean to chastise the guilty inhabitants of these lands, by the train of events which are taking place at present in the world, none can pretend to say. Certain it is, however, our carnal security and confident boasting, can furnish no proof of the continuance of our prosperity and safety, if they may not be viewed as a presage of our impending ruin; being too clear a proof of our fatal infidelity, notwithstanding our professions of superior regard to Deity, and reproaches of those whom we deem inferior to ourselves in this respect. Our Lord tells us, That the inhabitants of the old world did eat and drink, married wives and were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark: and the flood came and destroyed them all: Also that in the days of Lot, the inhabitants of the devoted cities of the plain, ate and drank, bought and sold, planted and builded, till the day that he, warned by the angels commissioned to execute the Divine decree, went out of Sodom, when it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and de-

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stroyed

stroyed them all†. That it hath been thus, whatever time the Son of man hath been revealed, by any signal visitation of his providence, the history of past ages can sufficiently attest. That it shall be so in future, and even with Britain in the day of visitation, notwithstanding such awful examples of Divine justice, held up for our admonition, there is but too much reason to fear.

When God of old threatened to inflict impending judgments on the Jews, for their rebellious conduct, instead of taking warning, and forsaking their evil courses, they either called the truth of such threatenings in question, or fondly persuaded themselves the period of their accomplishment was at a considerable distance. Hence, says the sacred oracle, "Behold, they of the house of Isreal say, the vision that he seeth is for many days to come, and he prophesieth of the times that are far off"‡; when, lo, the measure of their iniquity was full, and the threatened calamity about to be instantly inflicted. So far did their infidelity impose upon them, that the messengers of Heaven did not escape the effects of their resentment; because they troubled them with frequent warnings of their imminent danger, and importunate exhortations, in the name of the Lord, to reform their sentiments and conduct, as the only means of safety. So very apt are men, alas! to flatter themselves into a state of fatal security, when their prevailing temper and conduct mark them ripe for aggravated ruin. May we in these highly favoured, but guilty lands, be happily preserved from treading in the same, or similar paths, that offended Heaven make us not sharers of their plagues or worse! The wise and prudent foresee the evil, even at a distance, and timely consult their own safety: but the simple, the thoughtless and secure, pass on, with usual pace, in their former courses, and are punished; yea, destroyed, and that without remedy. The Au-

† Luke 17.

‡ Ezek. 12. 27.

thor is led to offer these reflexions at present to the serious consideration of his Countrymen, tho' he should be thought to have gone out of his road to make them, and may receive neither thanks nor compensation for his pains; fully persuaded we have all a deep concern in them, and that they shall be realized in their season, unless we are so wise and virtuous as to prevent this by a timely change of conduct.

☞ Since this Tract was prepared for the Press, the question of the Slave trade was once more moved in Parliament, and the Public need scarce be told the consequence. In a full House last session, a large majority voted the gradual abolition of this traffic necessary, as being cruel, inhuman, unjust, &c. limiting it to a certain period: but this session, when not a fourth part of the House was assembled, a majority of eight, by rejecting the motion, assure us that the abolition is totally unnecessary! Thus we see Parliaments, like individuals, can at times act inconsistently. But the former decision was given when their hearts were a little molified, and their conscience so touched, as to constrain them to pronounce it as above: but since, like Pharaoh, the noble leader and pattern of all tyrants, and taskmasters, their transient feelings of humanity have been lost, and their hearts become obdurate and insensible to the miseries of their fellow creatures; whence they refuse to let this traffic go, tho' God and man should loudly demand it. But it is pleaded, that policy requires this in present circumstances; and was there ever even a tyrant that could not plead some political reasons for his measures? Pharaoh, in oppressing the Israelites, and slaying their male children, proposed to his people only to treat them with necessary policy; "Come (says he) let us deal wisely with them." Need we hesitate a moment to say, that this is not the wisdom from above, tho' it

should acquire the sanction of royalty itself; that it favours of the earth, as an apostle expresses it, and is earthly, sensual, devilish? This is not the verdict of man, but of God, who neither can be deceived, nor deceive. That which statesmen term policy or wisdom, and deem calculated to promote national prosperity, not seldom is the greatest iniquity and folly; whence their measures are often fraught with guilt and ruin, as verified in the case of the haughty tyrant referred to above, and his people, who were blind and criminal enough to approve of, or abet his tyranny. But, in acting contrary to their declared conviction, their own lips condemn them and not I, and out of their own mouth shall they be judged at the solemn tribunal of the universal Judge, where they must shortly appear, stripped of every vestige of present authority. To them the words of God, addressed to that ancient tyrant, too justly apply: *As yet exalt ye yourselves against my people, that ye will not let them go?* Refuse ye still to break off this inhuman traffic, against which I have so often revealed my wrath from heaven? What a pity, that the policy of the great rulers of the earth should so often allow them to patronise cruelty, oppression, injustice and inhumanity; and that perhaps sometimes while constrained by the force of truth to confess that they see their measures in that very light!

When the motion respecting the Slave trade was lately made in Parliament, Mr Fox, among other excellent observations, had the following. "I trust
 " in God that the vote of every one who assented to
 " the resolutions of last year, was the result of his
 " conviction of conscience; I trust too that a vote
 " so much to their honour, and which had entitled
 " them to the applause of all Europe, will not now
 " be abandoned. I therefore would advise the House
 " to regard the present as a very fit time to take this
 " subject up, and to shew to all Europe that the
 " Parliament of Great Britain shall never lose sight
 " of

" of the principles of honour, justice and humanity.
 " That their Government is honourable—that their
 " pledge is faithfully adhered to—that when they de-
 " clare they detest anarchy and confusion, they love
 " the principles of real liberty; that they sincerely
 " wish for the happiness of mankind, and revere the
 " rights of nature." He concludes by expressing
 his hopes, ' that the House would not pursue a step
 ' so disreputable to its own honour and dignity, so
 ' dissatisfactory to the Public in general, as to re-
 ' linquish their former opinion, or, in other words,
 ' to tell the world at large, there was no sincerity in
 ' their declaration on a former day, and that they
 ' had completely given up even the gradual abolition
 ' of the Slave trade; that they never would resolve
 ' upon that measure at this or any other period.' He
 contended strenuously, against all delay in resuming
 the business, remarking that gentlemen seemed to
 have forgotten that the House not only resolved last
 year that the trade should be abolished in 1796, but
 came to several other resolutions as to regulations
 which were to be adopted in the interval, which
 were now prevented from taking effect.—Thus we
 see that the supreme Court of the nation hath once
 more denied an impartial hearing to the cause of
 their oppressed African brethren; and so given too
 much reason to suspect that they wish to evade it al-
 together. But, indeed, we may despair of a British
 senate, of the present complexion, ultrionously doing
 them justice; yet rest assured that the Lord of hea-
 ven will, and the more so as human justice lends a
 deaf ear to their cry. The more remarkable will
 their deliverance appear, when effected, the less of
 human interposition is to be seen in it; and the time
 to favour them, in spite of all the carnal policy of
 their enemies, we venture to predict, is not far di-
 stant. " For the oppression of the poor, for the sigh-
 " ing of the needy, now will I arise, (saith the Lord,)

“ I will set him in safety from him that puffeth at him”†, and such as would plead his cause.

May we not venture to say, that there is but one opinion, and one wish, concerning this detestable commerce, with all who have access to know its nature and fruits; those excepted whom interest, or the influence of interested men hath rendered blind and callous to the degraded situation, and unexampled sufferings of their fellow creatures; and such are quite disqualified to be competent judges of the matter. To suppose that any others, who have paid the least attention to the subject, would be against the abolition, were to libel humanity, and to offer the grossest insult to every susceptible mind. Is it not a little surprising, that a minister, who on almost every other occasion hath a majority at his devotion, should on this question not have better marshalled his ministerial phalanx; especially, if we take it for granted, that his ostensible professions met the ideas, and received the countenance of his royal master? Mercy is the brightest gem in the diadem of princes, by the due exercise of which kings and rulers resemble the great Lord of all. The most proper object of mercy is, innocence struggling with oppression and wretchedness, of which the slave trade furnishes an almost infinite variety of instances; and, of course, ample scope for the due display of that royal virtue. The attention of the Public hath, by various means, been so often directed to this subject, that possibly they may now be tempted to view it as an almanac out of date; tho’ there is yet perhaps more cause than ever to renew the effort. But should we think it out of date, as to our attention to it, and concern with it; may it not be asserted as a truth, founded on God’s moral administration, and the express dictates of his word, that it is not yet out of date, with regard to the punishment which our criminal hand in it, for so long a period, and in so large a measure, hath so richly

richly deserved? which punishment will overtake in due season, when it will be found not so easy to evade it. These and the like remarks, which the Reader will find in this Tract, proceed not from a spirit of enthusiasm, a distempered imagination, or disaffection to our Country or Government; the prosperity of which constitutes the Author's earnest desire, and the subject of his daily requests to Heaven: but from some little knowledge of the word of God, and attention to the usual conduct of his providence; and from a fixed heart concern that these lands may escape the effects of the Divine displeasure, which is already kindled against us. Let this apologize, if any apology be necessary, for the disproportionable length of this Introduction. Before I conclude it, however, I beg leave to add a few remarks on a late trial which excited the attention of the Public.

The friends and advocates of the Slave trade enjoyed a short triumph, in consequence of the decision in the affair of Captain Kimber; for great was their exultation on that occasion. Two of the principal witnesses on the side of the prosecution were committed to stand trial for the crime of perjury; one of whom was afterwards adjudged guilty. The Captain's acquittal, however, from the charge brought against him, and their commitment, did not proceed upon a full disclosure of the facts in the case, in his favour, but merely upon a contradiction in their evidence on some collateral point. The other witness was tried also upon the facts which he had stated in evidence against the Captain, and after a full hearing, was acquitted by the unanimous verdict of the Jury; so clear and complete was the testimony of the witnesses adduced in his favour. During the trial, such a shocking scene was laid open, that the whole Court and spectators were much affected; and the learned Judge on the bench expressed his utter abhorrence of such a cruel and nefarious system as is practised in
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the trade in question; declaring his full persuasion, that not only the present witness was innocent of the crime for which he had been indicted to stand trial, but also the other who had been lately found guilty. All this hath been declared to the Public in the newspapers; nor has any part of it been openly denied or controverted. It is hence easy to see in what light we are to view the Captain, notwithstanding his acquittal, and native to infer, that tho' he may escape the punishment due to his crimes from the hand of man, yet the equitable Judge of all will not suffer him, nor any that support, or prosecute the same hateful cause, to escape his righteous judgment; unless repentance and obtained mercy, prevent the execution of their too well-merited doom.

It is hoped the Reader, in perusing the following sheets, will have the goodness to excuse any inaccuracies he may discover, and to put a candid construction on whatever may not coincide with his own ideas; for, on a close review of the subjects adverted to, it is not easy to express the sentiments of a susceptible mind, and not verge to what some may deem an extreme. The interests of truth and humanity, and not any party motives, were the Author's object throughout the whole; but how far he has succeeded, must be left to the judgment of the candid Reader. Truth always claims respect on its own account, and tho' times may occur when it is deemed unseasonable; yet when it serves to excite the opposition, or procure the censure of those whose evil deeds are exposed by it, this is no mean proof that it is not out of season. The selected pieces are of such a nature as to recommend themselves, and supply the defects of the original which accompanies them. Tho' the addresses to Heaven, which occasionally occur in the following poem, may not stand the test of strict criticism, nor be relished, on that account, by some whom the Author, however, would wish to please; yet some pious Christians may find themselves dis-

posed

posed to excuse, if not to join cordially in them, as flowing from the nature of the subject, and calculated to express the best feelings of a benevolent heart, to that adorable Being who will not upbraid for such freedom;—who can turn the hearts of all men at pleasure, and the captivity of the people in question as streams in the south. The less the Powers of earth are disposed to listen to the cry of their necessity, the more one feels himself excited, on reviewing their case, to commit it to the Judge of all the earth, who hath promised to execute judgment and righteousness for all those that are oppressed; and will doubtless do right in reviewing and redressing their wrongs.

With regard, therefore, to the more immediate objects of this publication, it is much to be wished men would duly weigh the above, in connection with the apposite truths recorded by the Royal Psalmist; and then it would be much less difficult to persuade them to exercise justice and humanity towards the injured and oppressed: “Blessed is he that considereth the poor,” the oppressed and enslaved; “the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, and he shall be blessed upon the earth; and thou wilt not deliver him into the will of his enemies. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing: thou wilt make all his bed in his sickness” †.

† Psal. 41. 1, 2, 3.

THOUGHTS

ON MODERN POLITICS.

Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor to fail; that buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes.—The Lord hath sworn, Surely I will never forget any of their works. Shall not the land tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein, and the end thereof be as a bitter day?—I will set mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good —

They consider not in their hearts, that I remember all their wickedness: now their own doings have beset them about, they are before my face.—

YE Friends of virtue, to compassion prone,
Whose sighs are heav'd for sorrows not your own;
Whose breast partakes a brother's grief and pain,
Please, lend attention to my plaintive strain.

Here



Here no vain motive prompts a venal lay, 5
 'Tis nature speaks, her dictates I obey.
 I plead for mercy to an injur'd race,
 Yet not for mercy as an act of grace;
 'Tis justice due to all of Adam sprung,
 Whate'er their clime, religion, hue or tongue. 10
 —O for some sparks of pure poetic fire,
 And skill to touch persuasion's friendly lyre,
 That may some breasts to soft compassion move,
 And wake the pow'rs of sympathy and love;
 That, like a meteor, our late zeal don't die, 15
 While Afric's wrongs no ardor fresh supply!
 True, in this cause done well have not a few,
 Yet is there need the effort to renew,
 Till justice rous'd, no more her ear denies,
 But grants relief in answer to our cries. 20
 For should we cease the injur'd's cause to plead,
 Offended Heav'n will make the greater speed,
 Their wrongs to punish and redress as yore,
 When proud Mizraim humbled, did deplore.
 Infernal commerce in the human race, 25
 Whose sway imparts to all concern'd disgrace;
 Unfolds the passions of a callous soul,
 Whose ruling lust the basest views controul!
 Detested, canine appetite for gold,
 Which to secure best human rights are sold! 30
 Who can thy bane, or half thy fruits describe,
 Which taint the heart, and mind, and conscience bribe?
 Thy cursed train Britannia's guilt doth swell,
 And just desert is deepest shades of hell,
 Where sons of vice shall ceaseless tortures feel, 35
 Whose breast 'gainst pity was obdur'd as steel.
 Ah, long, too long hath reason shut her ear,
 And dormant nature spar'd the tribute tear!
 Too long deny'd have Britons to their kind,
 That fellow-feeling man from man should find! 40
 Too long have Christians wink'd at deep distress,
 Conniv'd at measures which their kind oppress!
 Can we so soon our late resolves forget,
 Which, ah, forebodes our own impending fate?
 •For

For ignorance can now no more atone, 45
 Since our black crimes in this vile trade are known.
 Should justice urge, but urge in vain her plea,
 Must not this heighten our iniquity;
 Make Britain's guilt, long since too great, still grow,
 And thousands riper for the place of woe? 50
 Whose pond'rous gates are open night and day,
 Smooth the descent to corrupt nature's sway.
 There guilt unpardon'd her dread doom shall meet,
 And justice stern her triumphs still complete.

Ye British dames, whose bosom heaves the sigh, 55
 And heart so oft speaks thro' the melting eye,
 At fancy's labour'd tale of feign'd distress,
 Your ev'ry feeling does my theme address.
 Why at such cost still court the tragic scene,
 Where nought but woes fantastic can be seen? 60
 The trade in Afric's race doth scenes unveil,
 Which all the friends of virtue must bewail.
 What tho' not fair, like you, can nature's die,
 Once taint a soul allied to the sky?
 Suppress not then th' emotions of the heart, 65
 In viewing scenes which countless pains impart;
 Nor once from these withdraw the human mind,
 Till made to feel the suff'rings of your kind.
 So great, so keen, such complicated woe,
 Should melt the heart, and cause our tears to flow. 70
 And those must sure possess an heart of stone,
 Who of our kind the mis'ry ne'er bemoan:
 For woes like theirs our pity should partake,
 Which may kind Heav'n in ev'ry bosom wake!

Inhuman traders in man's flesh, don't boast, 75
 The wealth so gain'd shall yet you dearly cost.
 You virtue barter for the sake of gold,—
 Virtue, for treasures vast, too cheaply sold;
 And make the worst of servitude your fate,
 Of Satan's chain shall feel the galling weight. 80
 Tho' Heav'n's just vengeance for the greatest crime,
 But rarely strikes ere it has granted time:
 Yet crimes pursu'd the heaviest doom insure,
 Who counsel spurn, God shall not long endure.

Their

Their cause He'll plead, one day assert their right, 85
 From their oppressors of superior might;
 Their wrongs avenge, them and their seed defend,
 Who seldom lack a foe, or find a friend.

He is the helper of the poor and weak,
 Tho' silent long, yet shall in season speak. 90

Ye sons of traffic, who this trade defend,
 Let reason judge, your ear a moment lend;
 Nor plead that Slav'ry in the world must be,
 Would nations hope to share prosperity.

Arraign not God, as if the world would fail, 95
 Did Justice, Truth and Mercy too, prevail.

Does nature once refuse her fruits to yield,
 If slaves do not still cultivate the field;
 Of human life the needful means deny,
 Unless you these by servile hands supply? 100

Dear bought the sweets that cost them sighs and pain,
 And all the ills to thralldom that pertain.

On this reflect, who feast at jovial boards,
 At their expence increase your sordid hoards;
 For wealth so gain'd must sure a curse entail, 105
 And leave ere long the owner to bewail.

The Pow'r on high cannot once partial prove,
 Whose ways are fraught with equity and love;
 While the reverse his righteous laws forbid,
 Soon, soon may He th' oppressed's cause implead! 110
 Say not, He suffers thralldom's cruel sway,

The Law is plain which mankind should obey.
 That Law transgress'd, in vain you urge the plea,
 That you accomplish but his own decree.

What finite mind can his procedure scan? 115
 Yet wise and just and good his ev'ry plan.

Not rare permits He what provokes his ire,
 Whence those should fear who 'gainst his word con-
 Their Brother dare for sordid gain inthrall, (spire;
 Unmindful who is common Lord of all. 120

Hath Heav'n enjoin'd that all men should be free?
 Whence, Liberty, so few are blest with thee;
 That of our race such millions are in thrall,
 And life and fortune at a Despot's call?

Did Heav'n ordain that Britons should thee share, 125
 This boon deny still to an Afric's pray'r?
 That thy mild sun should bless our Isle with light,
 Yet leave his Continent immers'd in night?
 The cause we know, the ends to him belong,
 And these once serv'd, th' effect he'll not prolong. 130

Can nature's God regard external grace,
 Abhor his work, because a sable race?
 Not so:—He views the pow'rs that reign within,
 Which are detach'd from casual hue of skin.
 Such poor distinctions reason must deride, 135
 As often foster vanity and pride.

Can souls be tainted by external hue?
 Is wisdom shar'd but by the beauteous few?
 And is nought beautiful but white and red,
 Which share alike the dame and vulgar bred? 140
 For all such gifts does nature's Lord bestow,
 Without distinction, on the high and low.

But say, occur not facts which still attest,
 That noble passions grace an Afric's breast;
 Love to his country, to his kin and kind, 145
 Virtues you rare in Europeans find?

Kind nature prompts the manners of the heart,
 Unvarnish'd by the gloss of modern art;
 For the great Sire gives Africans to heir
 Her common gifts, as objects of his care; 150

And shall we them their Father's boon deny,
 Who share such blessings from the smiling Sky?
 What tho' these virtues diff'rent forms assume,
 Nor flourish always with the fairest bloom?

What tho' they often too luxuriant shoot, 155
 From the rude vigour of a savage root,
 Produce effects which reason must disclaim?

Let us not indiscriminately blame;
 Nor say,—No grace hath He for them design'd,
 Who of one blood hath form'd the human kind. 160

What we extol in sons of Greece and Rome,
 In Afric's tribes in fairer forms still bloom;
 And shall antiquity be rais'd on high,
 Yet we just praise to Africans deny?

Ther

25 Them deem unworthy common rights to share, 165
 As if, excluded from their Maker's care?
 And why so partial are we still to those,
 While these are thought to merit all their woes?
 —The woes of Africans who can survey,
 30 Yet nature's strongest dictates disobey? 170
 Is it unmanly once to shed a tear,
 O'er human woe? What heart can this forbear?
 We to our nature this small tribute owe,
 35 And base the man that feels but his own woe.

When we direct to Afric's plains our eyes†, 175
 What horrid scenes of guilt to view arise!
 These facts present, too shocking to detail,
 But which we here attempt not to unveil.
 40 Ah! ruffian bands beset the huts of men,
 Spurr'd on to cater for base thralldom's reign, 180
 By those who should their pow'r abus'd employ,
 To guard their person, and increase their joy!
 —Lo, towns and villages set all on flame,
 45 And deeds achiev'd too grating far to name!
 The Babe, the Youth, the Friend and tender Wife,
 Torn from their kin, and all the joys of life; 185
 Dragg'd from their fields, with hearts that ake and
 Like slaughter-sheep, that avarice may feed. (bleed,
 50 I seem to hear fond Parents thus address,
 The ruffian bands, who them and theirs oppress; 190
 If all our tears, and all our cries are vain,
 From such rude treatment freedom once to gain;
 Oh! let our Babes your hearts to pity move,
 55 Have you ne'er felt pangs of parental love?

C 2

See

† The author's design in his strictures on the Slave trade, was
 not so much to describe its nature, this having been sufficiently
 done in other publications on the subject, as to suggest to the
 Reader some practical reflections from it, inculcate on his mind
 the due consideration of them, and lead him occasionally to ad-
 dress the Father of mercies in behalf of the wretched objects of
 this infernal traffic. Hence these reflections, being thought more
 necessary in present circumstances, occupy the greater part of the
 poem.

See how they stretch their little hands to you, 195
 And our request by stronger pleas pursue;
 Solicit pity by their cries and tears,
 While suppliant nature in each look appears.
 How hard the heart of that relentless crew,
 That such persuasions cannot once subdue? 200
 That can petitions so enforc'd refuse,
 And the poor suppliants with harsh words abuse;
 Nay more, can bind with savage hand their chain,
 And teach by stripes how vain 'tis to complain!
 Both tear the flesh, and leave a fest'ring wound, 205
 While streams of bloodtinge in their route the ground;
 Their swelled veins, and trembling pulse disclos'd,
 And their whole body naked and expos'd.
 Thus do the traders carry off their prize,
 Regardless quite of all their tears and cries. 210
 — See the fond Lover from the Damsel torn,
 Who won his heart, now hapless and forlorn,
 Of hope bereav'd of ever seeing more
 The man she loves, while seas between them roar.
 — Who can conceive what passions swell the heart, 215
 While with each object they are forc'd to part,
 That could alloy the various ills of life,
 While mortals sojourn thro' this vale of strife?
 Say, can we then with secret pleasure see,
 Our fellow-men robb'd of their liberty; 220
 Or coolly view such deeds as gender woe,
 Whence countless mis'ries ev'n to millions flow?
 Can Britons, honour'd with the Christian name,
 By such foul deeds that character defame?
 Oh! daring treason 'gainst the Pow'r above, 225
 Who all his works views with paternal love,
 For man to be so cruel, base and blind,
 As to enslave without remorse his kind!
 His knavish arts, what human tongue can tell,
 Which Afric's woes, and Europe's guilt still swell; — }
 Arts deep imbui'd with policy of hell. 230
 In these the fiend, and beast of prey appear,
 In human shape, and their own species tear.

In these ev'n Britons take an active part,
 Which proves them worse than savages in heart; 235
 Men complimented with the Christian name,
 But who derive an odium to the same.
 May Heav'n benign in mercy interpose,
 And check the ravages of Freedom's foes,
 That Afric's climes this trade no more infest, 240
 That countless myriads from its scourge may rest;
 While foreign traders, waisted to their coast,
 No more alarm, nor of this traffic boast!

Ah, human beings dragg'd by human hands,
 To serve mean despots in far distant lands; 245
 To pass their days in servitude and woe,
 Till death release each captive from his foe!
 Ere reach'd the port, if fate hath so decreed,
 What ills are borne, at which the heart must bleed!
 A prelude sad of what they farther dread,— 250
 And can we cease their injur'd cause to plead?

Who can describe their horrid floating jail,
 Where chains and torture, pest and death prevail;
 Where petty tyrants the dread scene commence,
 Inflicting pains not earned by offence? 255
 Here Britain's sons infuriate demons prove,
 Whose breasts are steel'd 'gainst sympathy and love!
 Their deeds disgrace themselves and native land,
 Load both with crimes that Heav'n's dread wrath de-
 These beasts of prey rush with infernal haste, (mand.
 To stain the virgin and the matron chaste, 260
 Unmov'd by all their piteous tears and cries,—
 Which woe fresh fuel to their flame supplies.

These rude assaults, too oft, alas! they bear,
 All fraught with pow'r a feeling heart to tear. 265
 Their nearest kin, perhaps, then chain'd below,
 Are forc'd to hear their cries, and share their woe,
 While their pain'd bosom, all indignant, burns,
 And grief, revenge and fury rage by turns.
 Say, Friendship, say, How can it but be so! 270
 Who hurts our Friend, we ever count our foe.

Ye British Fair, can you this scene survey,
 And not abhor inthralment's guilty sway;

Each effort use to save an injur'd race,
 That hence your Isle incur not such disgrace? 275
 —What aggravation of their complex woe!
 Base men, what ills from your foul commerce flow?
 The hapless captives, once within their pow'r,
 Afraid white cannibals may them devour,
 In self-destruction their sole refuge seek, 280
 If they can but their cruel fetters break.
 All ardent plunge they in the surgy wave,
 And rather die than be a white man's slave;
 Or run the risk to furnish those a meal,
 Whose bosom dark hath quite unlearn'd to feel. 285
 Torn from their country, their abodes and friends,
 By men they view as fierce incarnate fiends,
 To cross an element unknown before,
 Where storms assail, and furious billows roar;
 Where death in diverse, dreadful forms appears, 290
 Yet not to them a ghastly king of fears;
 What pangs they feel, what dire distress and pain,
 While wasted o'er the far-resounding main!
 What myriads hurry'd to the sullen wave,
 There prematurely find a wat'ry grave; 295
 Of rav'nous sharks become the instant prey*,
 An envy'd fate compar'd to thralldom's sway;

For

* This was lately realised in a Slave vessel wrecked on the coast of Barbadoes. When she struck, the Crew took to their boats, and made their escape to land. Of 283 male Blacks on board, only two were saved, owing to their being on deck at the time for the benefit of fresh air. All the rest perished in their chains, and their mangled remains were driven ashore with the wreck, in a plight too shocking to be described, after these voracious animals had sated their appetites upon them. About 80 females, with the two male slaves, who were all loose on deck, escaped safe to land, by swimming from the fury of the billows, and the devouring jaws of these monsters, and were all immediately sold by their merciless captors, who had so lately owed their own preservation to the seasonable interposition of Heaven.

The deplorable case of the Star Schooner (belonging to the house of Calvert and Co. London) as lately announced to the Public, which the Medusa Frigate relieved at the imminent risk of her own Crew, affords another proof of the bad policy, nay more, of the horrid-cruelty and injustice of this traffic, and reflects indelible disgrace

For these but feed delicious on the slain :
 But tyger man feasts on the living's pain;
 Ten thousand deaths inflict, ere once they die, 300
 On his own kind,—the offspring of the sky!
 What numbers of the sable race each year,
 On board our ships thus end life's sad career,
 Whose blood, O Britain, in thy skirts is found,
 Shall be requir'd, should mercy not abound; 305
 And change of conduct our due fate prevent,
 While Heav'n forbears, and some respite is lent !

Such as survive the num'rous deaths on board,
 Are sold in parcels to each servile lord,
 Who scruples not in human flesh to trade, 310
 Eager to gain guilt's base, degrading bread.
 Ah, man debasing mart, that stains the shore
 Of Britain's sons, we thy sad fruits deplore!
 Base men, how long, will ye your kind disgrace,
 And so insult the Father of our race; 315
 Augment your guilt, a dread, increasing store,
 Which you must mourn now, or for ever more?
 —Ye barb'rous scourges of the human kind,
 In causing grief, what pleasure can you find?
 Say, can the fruits of thrice illicit gain, 320
 'The owner bless, who scorns a Brother's pain?
 Can you behold, and yet increase their wrongs,
 Debarr'd each aid to mis'ry that belongs?
 Here scenes of woe assail the pained eye,
 Which claim from each the tribute of a sigh. 325
 Now dearest relatives feel fresh alarms,
 By their new despots torn from other's arms,
 While mingling tears, and mutual cries prevail,
 And strongest passions all the heart assail.

And

disgrace on its patrons and defenders. Humanity shudders at the recollection. It cannot be supposed that our Rulers will persist in sanctioning measures that are calculated to expose themselves to the contempt of the virtuous part of the Community, and forfeit every claim to their esteem; and that in the face of all their remonstrances.

And must they part, perhaps to meet no more 330
 Their nearest kin, whose fate their hearts deplore,
 Deny'd the comfort 'midst a foreign soil,
 To mix their sorrows, as they join in toil?
 Can these be men, who shut their heart, and ears,
 Against their Brethren's piercing cries and tears; 335
 In their affliction this small boon deny,
 To toil together, and together die?
 —I seem to hear the hapless tribes exclaim,
 Regard our woe, nor stain your boasted fame.
 Forbear we beg, O fellow men, forbear, 340
 Can you from us endeared objects tear,—
 Each mean of joy to springs of sorrow turn,
 Yet for such conduct never—never mourn?
 The day of recompence is drawing near,
 For Heav'n regards th' oppressed's cry and tear. 345
 All ye who traffic in the race of man,
 And would invert your Maker's kindest plan,
 Can you invade your nature's strongest ties,
 Regardless of the moving tears and cries
 Of the fond Parent, pressing to his heart 350
 His darling Child, both frantic as they part?
 And can you sever wedlock's sacred tie,
 In proud defiance of the Pow'r on high,
 And the dear pledges of their nuptial love,
 While mutual pangs a heart of flint might move? 355
 Ye callous souls, how can ye tear in twain,
 Two hearts made one by friendship's dearest chain?
 A tie so firm, so delicate and strong,
 Might lasting prove, did not your hands it wrong;
 And by the efforts of a gen'rous heart, 360
 The purest joys, and solid good impart.
 Has Heav'n no eyes such conduct to inspect?
 No pow'r or will its authors to correct?
 What woe to those who 'bet th' afflicted's load!
 'Tis mine to punish,—saith Almighty God. 365
 Are deeds like these allow'd in Britain's clime,
 Where darling Freedom vaunts her early prime;
 Where Heav'n reveals benevolence divine,
 Whose laws and dictates there so brightly shine?

Yea,

Yea, in her land oppression wields her rod, 370
 In dread defiance of the wrath of God!
 When once arriv'd beneath Britannia's shade,
 Where Liberty her boasted home hath made,
 Their day of thrall with clouds and tempest lours,
 And on its victims all its vengeance pours. 375
 This guilty land the shade of death appears,
 And ev'ry object gloom and horror wears.
 Egyptian bondage ev'ry where bears sway,
 And free born men must varlets oft obey;
 Submit reluctant to the driver's thongs, 380
 And each abuse to slav'ry that belongs.
 In this rank soil of dismal care and grief,
 Where nought affords the prospect of relief,
 Degraded brethren ev'ry where abound,
 Like-beasts of burden, doom'd to till the ground; 385
 Each servile task incessant to apply
 For Europe's sons who pity them deny;
 While woes assume a different shape each hour,
 And Afric's hapless race piece-meal devour.
 —Their wrongs and cries offend the eye and ear, 390
 The cruel lash their skin and flesh doth tear;
 And various tortures near a kin to hell,
 Which their sad plaints in quick rotation swell†.
 Not rare these drive to consummate despair,
 Whence death and strangling they to life prefer. 395
 From

† The heavy charge brought by the God of heaven against the rulers of Israel, too justly applies to the modern traders in human flesh, and in effect also to all those that would defend and support them in prosecuting so nefarious a traffic; "Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the house of Israel: Is it not for you to know judgment? Who hate the good, and love the evil: who pluck off their skin from off them, and their flesh from off their bones; who also eat the flesh of my people, and flay their skin from off them, and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces, as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron," Micah 3. Is there not much reason to fear, he may also verify in our experience what he added, and in time inflicted with respect to them? "Then shall they cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings."

From this disgrace the sex cannot be freed,
 Whose furious passions oft, too oft, exceed.
 The female name such cruelties oft stain,
 As ev'n a savage in cold blood would pain.
 The dame of fashion views, with sparkling eyes, 400
 Her slaves chastis'd, or she the lash applies,
 And acts a fury, that delights in gore,
 Supplies in malice what she wants in pow'r.
 To gratify of gain her keen desire,
 Not rare she prostitutes her slaves for hire ! 405
 And masters act this part t'oblige their guests,
 Good Heav'n! how long wilt thou permit such beasts?
 Their brutish tyrants God and man defy,
 To satiate lust break thro' each virtuous tie.
 Nor virgin-claims, nor wedlock's bands they spare, 410
 Tho' all should end in death, or dread despair.
 In rapes and tortures seem they to delight,
 In deeds the brood of an infernal night.
 Could God connive at such outrageous lust,
 Would he not be both partial and unjust ? 415
 Connive He cannot, these his wrath await,
 Tho' slow to punish, dread shall prove their fate.
 —The hapless Africans, inur'd to toil.
 Their days and strength spent on a foreign soil,
 Soon as disabl'd by disease and years, 420
 Regardless of their piteous groans and tears,
 Their cruel lords them as a load cast off,
 Expos'd the butt of ev'ry varlet's scoff!
 Thus fellow men, with pain and hunger pine,
 Without a where their body to recline. 425
 Worn out with these, they quite neglected lie,
 Deny'd relief—Deny'd in peace to die.
 Such is the liberty that planters give,
 Which to attain, say, is it worth to live?
 The wicked's tender mercies cruel are, 430
 Which furnish food to nourish keen despair.

While toil, and pain, and hunger all oppress,
 They bear unpity'd, ah, unheard distress!
 Till death, which sets the wretched captive free,
 Lodge in that house, where no proud despots be, 435
 To

To wield oppression's cruel rod hence more:
For pow'r abus'd shall not this bourne pass o'er.

Ye callous traders, in the human kind,
To your own fate, ah, why so deaf and blind?
Why so forget the solemn, final doom, 440
And place of rendezvous—the silent tomb,
Where undistinguish'd both the lord and slave,
Must yet associate in one common grave;
Where vanish shall the gay parade of Courts,
And Death with schemes of proud ambition sports?
This goal unites, and here the poor find rest, 445
Here lie alike th'oppressor and oppress.

“ Here the poor slave, so long his master's scoff,
“ Regains his freedom, flings his burden off”*.
Th' ignoble crew that human bliss oppose, 450
Great Lord, rebuke! are they not 'mong thy foes?

And let not man, sprung from the dust, prevail,
When he would dearest rights of men assail!
Th' oppressed's cause, do Thou in season plead,
Nor let oppressors in their courses speed! 455
O change their hearts! are they not in thy hand?

Make yet a blessing to their native land;—
A blessing too, to their now injur'd kind,
Become the benefactors of mankind;
That ev'ry breast benevolence inspire, 460
And ev'ry rank to human weal conspire!

Tho' Heav'n insulted, vengeance long restrain,
Let not oppressors wreathe the galling chain,
Lest the oppress'd should break it on their head,
Avenge their wrongs by smiting tyrants dead. 465
Orphan and widow from his Throne on high,
He, with a Father's and a Husband's eye,
Regards, and will their ev'ry wrong redress,
And those chastise ere long who them oppress†.

Almighty

* There the prisoners rest together; they hear not the voice of the oppressor: the small and the great are there; and the servant is free from his master. Job 3. 18, 19.

† Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me, is the express injunction and promise of that
God,

Almighty Sov'reign of the human race, 470
 Whose love is not confin'd to time or place,
 Make Truth and Liberty to bless each clime,
 Their sway prolong to the grand eve of time;
 That slavish chains each where assunder broke,
 The nations hence may feel no servile yoke; 475
 That sons unborn may bless the happy day,
 Which broke oppression's long continu'd sway;
 While Britain gives this treasure to the rest,
 And her own sons in sharing it are blest!

But should she still this sacred boon deny, 480
 To Afric's num'rous, injur'd progeny;
 On Heav'n benign their cares let them repose,
 And all that feel for their protracted woes:
 Tho' Britain's Senate justice should deny,
 And shut their ear against oppression's cry, 485
 Deliv'rance shall not always mock their hope;
 Their day of Freedom's dawn ere long will ope,
 In spite of all her servile, haughty foes,
 Who now in vain her mighty course oppose:
 For nature's God their righteous cause shall plead, 490
 And make them share each boon He hath decreed;
 Against their tyrants cause his anger burn,
 Who shall his wrath deserved feel in turn.
 Let such be wise, and shun each path which brings,
 Heav'n's dread corrections both on states and kings;
 Lest woes invade proportion'd to our bliss, 495
 Our prosp'rous days should end in deep distress;

Left

God, who deigns to own himself—a Father to the fatherless, and a Husband to the widow in his holy habitation;—the former enforced by the latter. Agreeably to this, he solemnly charges his people; “Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me; I will surely hear their cry; and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.” Exod. 22. 22, 23, 24. Does the Slave Trade neither make nor afflict fatherless or widows? Let those that deal in it answer; and if God be a God of truth, look forward to the execution of his threatened vengeance, when his wrath shall wax hot against them, and leave their wives widows and their children fatherless. How often do the abettors of war, that destroyer of the human race, incur this awful threatening!

Let when too late our folly we deplore,
And Britain's fun should set to rise no more.

P A R T II.

Come now, and let us reason together. Hath not God made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and determined the bounds of their habitation? Are they not men and Brethren? Did not He that made us in the womb, make them? and did not one fashion us in the womb? He that loveth not his Brother abideth in death. Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law. Do not rich men oppress? He that mocketh and oppresseth the poor, reproacheth his Maker—to whom belongeth vengeance and recompence. Behold, the tears of such as are oppressed, and they have no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there is power. The Lord saith, How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws? Understand, ye brutish among the people. He that chastiseth the heathen, shall not be correct? And shall he not visit for these things?

MY pained muse, cease farther to unveil,
Tyrannic deeds, too shocking to detail.
The heart recoils at such sad tales of woe,
This commerce man converts to man's worst foe;
Transforms our species into beasts of prey, 5
Whose lust o'er reason holds despotic sway:
Whence lord and slave a race degraded prove,—
How long shall that in paths forbidden move?

D

If

If the narration of such wrongs cause grief,
What then to bear them hopeless of relief? 10

Such as have weather'd a tempestuous night,
May hail a calm returning with the light;
Such as have borne the toil of long campaigns,
May yet rehearse them in thrice joyful strains;
The wretched convict waded from his shore, 15
May yet with joy his native land explore:

But, ah! for them no distant prospects rise,
Black clouds and tempests so o'ercast their skies,
That nor at noon, nor eve one gleam appears,
Their hope to cherish, and dispel their fears. 20

The woes they've felt forebode a worse to come,
Till Death shall bound them by the silent tomb,
Where proud oppression can no farther go,
Nor the poor captive dread his potent foe.

If when the storm of human ills appears, 25
With all its real, or fantastic fears,

Our store of wisdom, or improved sense,
Not seldom proves a weak and short defence;
Fails to instruct how we may bear, or shun,
The flowing tide, when high its breakers run: 30

How can their minds untutor'd meet their woes,
Whose furious torrent daily on them flows?

If in their place, say, how would we them bear,
Whose hearts recoil when trivial ills appear?

Few, like the rock lash'd by the stormy wave, 35
Remain unmov'd, and each affliction brave.

We who are apt in ev'ry case to fear,
Can them forget who deep distress still bear;
Who, void of gain, doom'd to corroding care,
Are left to reap the anguish of despair. 40

Deny'd all pity, and all human aid,
Their woes in vain they labour to evade,
Deny'd 'midst agonies of keenest grief,
Each soothing cordial that can yield relief.

Tho' God permits they yet such ills should bear, 45
Of ranking them among his foes beware:

For whom he loves not rare does he chastise,
While those are spar'd to whom he grace denies! 46

If to their Judge with patience they complain.
 He'll sooth their anguish, or reward their pain, 50
 And in his time take vengeance on their foes,
 Who in his wrath shall be made drunk with woes.

Tho' lively hope hereafter Heav'n to share,
 May oft induce the ills of life to bear,
 The sad variety of human woe, 55
 To which for guilt frail man is doom'd below;
 Tho' the bright prospect of perpetual joy,
 A bliss impart no trouble can destroy :
 Yet no such hope can fill their anxious heart,
 Or sooth the anguish of their frequent smart, 60
 Deny'd each mean eternal life to know †,
 While mind and body liberty forego.
 Their cruel lords would to the earth them chain,
 Make wretched here—expose to future pain.

Ye who pursue, and who this trade defend, 65
 Recall to mind your last decisive end,

D 2

That

† That our Colonies are provided with Clergy, whose business it is to point out the way to eternal life, is not denied;—but whose servants are they, and whose cause do they promote? Do they watch for the souls of the planters and their slaves, as they who must soon render a strict account? By their fruits ye shall know them. From what we have heard of their practice, and their doctrine may be supposed to correspond, are they not in general worse than blind leaders of the blind? Either thro' ignorance, or dissipation, if not thro' both, is it not to be feared that they are, for the most part, very unfit to be teachers of righteousness? Having their hearts set on the mammon of unrighteousness, or engrossed by the pleasures and vanities of a present world, they find little time, and still less inclination to attend to the important duties of their sacred function; whence, in respect of religious instruction, the slaves are as poorly provided for in general, as in their native country, and, in regard of moral examples, much worse. Do we hear that they are taught to read, and have the sacred writings been put into their hands, except perhaps in a few rare instances, such as that in the subjoined account of the conversion of a Negro slave? That the Deity may, however, suit himself to their condition, and visit some among them with his special favour, is readily granted: but that they are furnished with the means of knowing his revealed will, and duly encouraged to the practice of it, what Christian, in the least acquainted with their situation, or even friend of the trade in question, will venture to assert?

That earthly prospects will ere long all close,
And usher scenes of endless bliss or woes.

Why now forget the grand tremendous scene,
Where all the sons of Adam must convene ;
Where lord and slave shall on a level stand,
And awful justice make her stern demand ?

Great Day of dread, decision and despair,
Which shall the wrongs of all oppress'd repair,
Repay the wicked's ev'ry deed of woe,
Who in their Judge shall find a mighty foe.
Nor wealth, nor birth, nor pow'r can then avail,
And ev'ry plea of vice her sons shall fail.

Ye savage brood, who mock at human pain,
Whose all in all is your dear idol,—*gain*,
Revere your frame, and say, what would you feel,
Did others thus with you, and kindred deal ?
Do you not love your Friends and native soil,
And execrate the hand would make you toil,
To feed some pamper'd lord, while left to share
The countless woes for others you prepare ?
Would you resign your offspring dear to chains,
To drag out life, oppress'd in foreign plains;
Deny'd the comforts which life's ills allay,
While clouds and tempests quite obscure their day!
At this your hearts revolt with proud disdain,
And are the sable race not sons of men ;
Like you, of feelings and of rights possess'd,
Tho' their abode in Afric's climes be plac'd ?
What you would have your neighbour do to you,
Do ye to him, be just, be kind and true ;
For whoso'er our common nature share,
Of right may claim all this fraternal care.
Respect the feelings of the human frame,
In ev'ry clime, and all our kind the same.
Can lust of gold, the basest that controls,
The basest appetites of meanest souls ;

Once sanction deeds replete with guilt and woe,
To which worst crimes their fatal birth still owe ?

Base servitude, with all thy kindred train !
Each thought of thee a feeling heart must pain ;

To inflave our kind, to swell vile lucre's store,
 Whose thralls still cry, like the horse-leech, Give more.
 What arguments can proud oppressors plead,
 To veil the horrors of so foul a deed ; 110
 To varnish crimes which kindred claim to hell,
 And the dire list of human mis'ries swell ?

Fair Europeans, can you once suppose,
 That Afric's race are Heav'n's invet'rate foes ;
 That 'tis a crime—unpardonable sin, 115
 To be convicted of a blacker skin ?

Hath God with-held what constitutes them man,
 And them excluded from Redemption's plan ?
 Tho' dark their hue,—untutor'd too their mind,
 Yet have they claims peculiar to our kind. 120

Let av'rice urge her each degrading plea,
 They still are men, and should not men be free ?
 Hath man been form'd to be of man the slave ?
 Embrace the yoke, ye who thus proudly rave. 125

And is it policy to act a part,
 Which must to myriads still occasion smart ?
 Tho' statesmen should such Politics still own,
 Can they succeed a state, or grace a throne ?
 What guilt involves, can nought but woe procure,
 Which shall o'ertake, tho' Heav'n may long endure.

Reflect, ye base, who in this trade embark, 130
 On your vile deeds, and their demerit mark.

God's image can you injure and despise,
 And yet escape the vengeance of the Skies ?
 Insulted reason must that trade abhor, 135
 And ev'ry Christian its dire fruits deplore.

Accursed traffic,—Men the merchandise,
 Who subjects are of the all-ruling Skies.

Why say, They feel not, they are proof to pain*,
 What facts attest how much their passions reign. 140

D 3

These

* Some are weak enough to insinuate, That they see something
 in the very countenance of a Black which indicates his destination
 to a state of servitude—a notion not more unkind and disrespectful
 to the natives of Africa, than fraught with pride and partiality
 with regard to ourselves. Hence they harden themselves against
 the

These to the heart make their direct appeal,
 And quite evince that Afric's sons can feel.
 Tho' honour's dupes may proud distinctions claim,
 In those we trace deserts of fairer fame.
 Untainted nature oft in them displays, 145
 What grandeur gives not with its boasted grace.
 Her work is not less perfect in a slave,
 Than in a prince to whom a crown she gave :
 For this not rare is sway'd by lust and pride,
 While that takes truth and virtue for his guide. 150
 The haughty lord may own a servile heart,
 While his poor vassal acts a patriot's part.
 The footy Ethiop in his native air,
 May virtues claim in polish'd regions rare.

Let such as plead there is no ill in pain, 155
 Forego their freedom, and embrace the chain;
 Subject their person to the Driver's thong,
 And all the plagues to thralldom that belong.

When

the common impressions of humanity, while they hear of the unparalleled sufferings of their African brethren, by the foolish notion that they have not the same feelings with other men; and, therefore, that it is not fair to reason from what Europeans would feel in a similar situation. This absurd opinion is sufficiently refuted by the best authenticated accounts of Africa and its inhabitants: and therefore such as urge it must betray their own ignorance, as well as a want of the nobler feelings of human nature. What pitiful arguments will some use, when their own supposed interest once blinds the eye of the mind, and cancels or perverts the sensibilities of the heart! No creature is more hardened against his own species, or reclaimed with greater difficulty, than tyrant man, where his own sordid interest seems to him to interfere.

Equally unfounded is that base reflection, so often thrown out against the sable race, That they are incapable of virtue, or not susceptible of the impressions of it. It were much to be wished that the white people, with whom they are conversant, were exemplary for this themselves; for till that is the case, the reflection, tho' well-founded, loses its weight, and comes with a very ill grace from them. With what consistency can they reproach their poor ignorant slaves with impropriety of conduct, when they are at no pains to instruct them in their duty, or to set a proper example before them. Can it be supposed that the slave, who hath so few motives to virtuous conduct, and so few means of improvement, will aspire after a higher measure of it than his master?

When toil exhausts, and thirst and hunger pain,
 With all the ills of servitude's dread reign;— 160
 When these assailing, all their shafts display,
 Have they no pow'r to hurt, no force to slay?
 Unaided nature sinks beneath the load,
 Can aught sustain but an Almighty God?
 The hopes of fame the hero's bosom fire, 165
 To deeds illustrious various springs conspire.
 No threats, no tortures can the martyr move,
 Thro' love of Truth, and hopes of Bliss above:
 But thralldom's race are doom'd to pain and toil,
 With sweat and blood, to dress a foreign soil; 170
 Their state forlorn excludes all present joys,
 And of the future each fond hope destroys.
 They sullen sink into their native dust,
 Nor seek their comfort in the Christian's trust.
 Untutor'd nature them to ask will lead, 175
 What is that God, whose aid white tyrants plead?
 On us what favour can that Pow'r bestow,
 Whose sons occasion all our various woe?

Ye beasts of prey, with fair complexion's hue,
 No human tongue can quite describe your due. 180
 The God of nature, on whose gifts you feed,
 Is not your God, else yours are crimes indeed.
 In vain you boast that you are free and brave,
 And call him yours—He never form'd a slave.
 As made by him, we are as brave and free, 185
 And might be still, but for curs'd slav'ry.
 If a just God that hates the crimes of men,
 Will he not view your persons with disdain;
 Your loud pretensions one day all disclaim,
 And you chastise who dare abuse his name? 190

Let candour speak, say, can it but be so,
 Do not such thoughts from this vile traffic flow?
 Can Afric's race devout that God adore,
 Whose servants haunt from such base ends their shore?
 Is that religion, think they, from above, 195
 Whose sons are strangers to the fruits of love?
 Is that great being Father of us all,
 And can he bid his sons each other thrall?

No

No—You are right, these men that haunt your }
 Tho' they of virtue, and of freedom boast, (coast, }
 Are but vile slaves,—to God and virtue lost. 200 }
 The Christian faith is doubtless from above,
 And well inculcates all the fruits of love :
 But these are traitors to so good a cause,
 And boldly violate their Maker's laws. 205
 Who you oppress rebel against that King,
 'To whom true Christians daily tribute bring,
 And shall receive a recompence of woe,
 Who can be safe—Almighty God their foe?
 Ye sons of commerce, can you nought descry, 210
 In Afric's states, that can attract your eye,
 But the illicit commerce of your race?
 Ah, can your hearts be set on wealth so base?
 Wealth better sought by what their rip'ning sky,
 Their fertile plains, their arts and mines supply. 215
 Let no vile motive tempt you to oppose
 The bliss of man, or to increase his woes,
 Lest God offended should your land assail,
 Cause myriads smart; and the effects bewail;
 Your Commerce blast with his deserved ire, 220
 And you adjudge to never-quenched fire.
 Deem it your task that blessing to restore,
 Of which you robb'd your fellow men before;
 Nor let your ear be shut against their cry,
 Which doubtless hear shall he who rules on high. 225
 He beareth long, yet will in time redress
 Their wrongs, and the oppressor will oppress†.
 Reflect, ye Great, reflect on human woe,
 Nor once alledge, Concerns it us to know?
 Exert your pow'r to blunt the edge of pain, 230
 To bless your kind, count this your truest gain.
 While you the bounties of kind Heav'n enjoy,
 As grateful stewards, these talents still employ,
 To

† With the merciful thou wilt shew thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt shew thyself upright: with the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself froward. For thou wilt save the afflicted people; but wilt bring down high looks. Psal. 18. 25, 26, 27.

To swell the stock of human happiness, 235
 That poor and wretch'd may you as guardians bless.
 Thus cheer the heart, and dry the flowing tear,
 And then your Mammon heav'nly fruit shall bear.
 Blest task of wealth---to give unask'd relief,
 And shed the balm that cures the smart of grief!

Say, does this trade the human race devour, 240
 And still on myriads its dire vengeance pour;
 Cut off in shoals, while the survivors late,
 With countless wrongs and sorrows is replete?
 I seem to hear their souls indignant cries
 For justice to the Sov'reign of the skies. 245

" O Lord, most holy, just and true, how long,
 " Wilt thou forbear to plead, and venge our wrong,
 " On those who dwell on proud Britannia's isle,
 " Whose distant coasts our tears and blood defile;
 " And other nations who inthrall our kin, 250
 " Unaw'd by all thy threat'nings against sin?"

Ye injur'd souls, in vain you shall not plead,
 Their cup once full, stern justice shall succeed,
 And sorrows distribute to all your foes,
 Who, not reform'd, shall reap deserved woes. 255

Almighty is your great, redeeming Lord,
 The hosts of heav'n are subject to his word.
 He, in his time, will plead your righteous cause,
 Your wrongs avenge---these insults of his laws.

To Britain's Senate, next to the Most high, 260
 They eager list their longing, wishful eye,
 In hope that thence dear Freedom's day will rise,
 And spread o'er Afric calm, and cloudless skies.

Britannia's Senate let us all address,
 Insist they should such daring wrongs redress, 265
 A willing ear lend to oppression's cry,

Lest they provoke their righteous Judge on high,
 Whose hand sustains the balance and the sword,
 And who e'en rulers will ere long award;
 Lest at our courses he incens'd should swear, 270

That, like a lion, he his foes shall tear;
 Bring swift destruction on our native land,
 Too long degraded by a servile band.

Should

Should Rulers listen not to justice claim,
 'They more than tarnish their judicial fame: 275
 When once averse to hear her potent plea,
 And in her light the deeds of men to see,
 The blow, long merited, assails a land:
 For justice fled, dread ruin is at hand.

Let King and Senate, Priest and People join, 280
 And their best efforts in this cause combine,
 'That on our Land approving Heav'n may smile,
 Nor visit crimes that stain this favour'd Isle.

" Statesmen and Patriots, does it well agree
 " With you---the guardians of the brave and free,
 " For the emolument of sordid trade, 285
 " To give such villanies a legal aid?
 " Let Afric's children tread their native shore,
 " And *British Ruffians* ravage them no more?
 " The galling chains of servitude remove, 290
 " And leave them all to Liberty and Love."

Ye worthy Patriots, who this trade lament,
 Whose ears are open to oppression's plaint,
 The Injur'd's cause go on with zeal to plead,
 Till you from bondage raise their drooping head. 295
 Let others be by proud ambition fir'd,
 For trivial seats hope still to be admir'd:
 But you pursue a path that leads to fame,
 And will not fail t'immortalize your name.
 Your active efforts in so good a cause, 300
 Shall gain you honour, and the Just's applause;
 Secure the blessing of the free, and slave,
 Of myriads rescu'd from untimely grave.

Shall Britain's sons, who boast of Freedom's reign,
 Forge chains for others which themselves disdain?
 O Heav'n! forbid they longer should deny, 305
 That boon to others, which themselves enjoy:---
 A boon ordain'd, not sure to be confin'd,
 But spread as widely as the human kind.
 Ye sons of Freedom, that still taste her joy, 310
 Your wealth, and pow'r, and ev'ry gift employ
 To spread her reign o'er earth's extended space,
 Disdaining narrow views of hue and place.

Let

Let race to race the glorious deed record,
 That Britain's sons have human rights restor'd; 315
 And thus redeem'd their too long sully'd fame,
 Deriving deathless glory to their name.

The deed illustrious angels from the sky,
 Will view with transports of extatic joy;
 While sons of mercy thro' the earth below, 320
 Hail the glad day with hearts that warmly glow.
 Soon may her pow'r to ev'ry bosom steal,
 Till mankind all her kindly influence feel!
 The joyful tidings bear to Afric's coast,
 Which to convey a Seraph glad would boast; 325
 While men to tell, and angels joy to hear,
 And grateful hearts to Heav'n their tribute bear.

When, when shall Slav'ry break her galling chain,
 And Freedom ~~be~~ to universal reign;
 While war is hush'd, nor clank of chains heard more,
 And men unaw'd frequent their native shore? 330
 In ev'ry nation may oppression cease,
 And Freedom reign, with its production peace,
 Till the whole world shall hail the sacred boon,
 And beams of knowledge spread like rays of noon!

O happy task, to set the captive free, 340
 In thraldom's land proclaim true Liberty;
 From sorrow's furrow'd cheek to wipe the tear,
 And banish from the cot each ground of fear!
 Delightful task! to loose with friendly hand, 345
 From grateful hearts, the stern oppressor's band;
 To add fresh lustre to the Christian name,
 And wide diffuse from pole to pole its fame.
 Let Freedom smile on Afric's spacious coast,
 And ev'ry scene will fresh perfection boast. • 350
 The wastes of pillage will she soon repair,
 And cause her sons to breathe their native air;
 Rais'd to their rank in being's vary'd scale,
 While tales of woe no more our ears assail.

While Liberty her sacred banner rears, 355
 And rends the flag besmear'd with blood and tears;
 While pale oppression shrinks, and quite expires,
 Nor kindles more her dread, destructive fires;
 While

While myriads crowd the sultry, fertile plain,
 To hail a blessing long implor'd in vain : 360
 Let sacred Truth—the offspring of the Sky,
 With olive bough, to their abodes draw nigh;
 Proclaim Redemption thro' Immanuel's blood,
 The means that lead to happiness with God. 365

O Thou, whose care o'er thousand worlds presides,
 Whose word gave being, and whose wisdom guides,
 On man, benighted, beams celestial shed,
 And raise from gloom and servitude his head!
 Once Afric's climes shar'd noon of sacred light,
 While Albion lay involv'd in heathen night; 370
 And may that light revisit soon their coast,
 And constitute their glory and their boast!
 Let nations all concur to make them free,
 And thus attest their love of Liberty;
 That man essay t'enslave his kind no more, 375
 Nor love of gain cause myriads sad deplore.

Almighty Sire, dissolve their twofold band,
 And Faith and Freedom soon for them command!
 Possess'd of these, O make them blest and free,
 That heart and life to Thee devoted be! 380
 That nought to hurt, or to destroy be found,
 That Peace and Plenty ev'ry where abound;
 While Pray'r and Praise, like incense to the Skies,
 Succeed t'oppression's grievous tears and cries:
 Then Afric's climes, resembling those above, 385
 A land of Peace and Happiness shall prove,

P A R T III.

The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice: let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof;—The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.—I Nebuchadnezzar blessed the Most High; and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and whose kingdom is from generation to generation.—And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou?—I Nebuchadnezzar praise, and extol, and honour the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase.—Know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.—And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions and rulers shall serve and obey him. All kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him.—Then Daniel blessed the God of Heaven, and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever; for wisdom and might are his: and he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding.—Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased: but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.—He shall deliver the needy when he crieth: the poor also, and him that hath no helper, and shall break in pieces the oppressor.—He shall redeem from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight; and his enemies shall lick the dust.

E

Thus

Thus saith the Lord God, Let it suffice you, O princes: remove violence and spoil, and execute judgment and justice; take away your exactions from my people, saith the Lord God.—Talk no more so exceeding proudly, let not arrogance come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed.—The Lord is greater than all gods: for in the thing wherein they dealt proudly he was above them.—Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this work be of men, it will come to nought: but, if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found to fight against God.—And the king of Israel said, Tell Ben-hadad, Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself, as he that putteth it off:—for the battle is not yours but God's.----Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land: and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.

THAT wise and virtuous measures bless a land,
 While the reverse its prosp'rous state withstand,
 Past ages all their suffrage joint will bear,
 And in the present too, the truth is clear.
 When Liege and Rulers with one heart unite, 5
 And in true virtue place their chief delight,
 Approving Heav'n will their blest state secure,
 Nor leave the latter to oppress the poor;
 Which would not fail to stain their princely state,
 And to accelerate a fearful fate. 10
 But when o'er both curs'd vice extends her sway,
 No wonder clouds obscure the light of day;
 And from their store pour forth a dreadful storm,
 Which shall the face of nature all transform.
 The safest policy regards the Sky, 15
 For prosper long can none who this defy;
 And no true policy can cherish war,
 Whose dire effects our ev'ry comfort mar.

This

This truth to prove, suffice experience past,
 How long shall states each other tear and waste? 20
 To Albion's sons,—to People, Prince and Peer,
 Their Country's peace and honour should be dear;
 And what these injures grief unfeigned cause,
 What them promotes secure deserv'd applause.

Of late a nation, Freedom's pride and boast †, 25
 (May Heav'n forbid this character be lost!)

E 2

Could

† The Reader needs scarce be told that the fate of Poland is here referred to, when robbed of her peaceably acquired Freedom, thro' the hostile aggression of one Power, the treachery and dissimulation of another, and the unaccountable spathy of all. Tho' the Poles had among us many warm friends, who cordially wished them success in their laudable efforts to recover and establish their liberty on a firm and honourable basis; yet as a State we afforded them neither sympathy nor relief; nor used indeed the least effort in their favour; notwithstanding the conduct both of Prince and People deserved a better fate. Taking that, in connection with the late unjustifiable partition of that kingdom, it is hardly possible for a feeling mind, possessed of the least sense of justice, to suppress a laudable indignation. If we detest the villain that robs his neighbour of a little of his property, and deem him worthy of death; in what light can we view those who rob millions of their fellow men of the dearest blessings in life? Will a Crown and sceptre efface the turpitude of crimes, or screen those who perpetrate them from the righteous vengeance of the Almighty? Must not even such as wear these appear at his bar on a level with the meanest of their subjects? Even such hath he threatened, if found among the number of his enemies, *to strike through in the day of his wrath*, Psal. 110. 5. Tho' every man owes a becoming deference to rulers and great men, acting in character, yet the liberty of forming some judgment of their public conduct, by which the peace and happiness of society may be materially affected, is a right secured to every man by the great Author of his being, and in its exercise interwoven with his very frame; a right therefore to be tamely resigned to none on earth. These are like a city built on a hill, which cannot be hid; and as soon may a man with his eyes open exclude the light of the sun at noon-day, as forbear to judge of actions that are notour to all the world, while he feels himself interested in them.

The late partition of Poland gives no amiable discovery of the motives by which princes have been too often actuated; nor does it tend to recommend and dignify the regal character. Some that professed themselves alarmed at the apprehended aggrandizement of France, and assigned this as a reason for taking up arms, could

witness

Could arm in support of a tyrant's throne,
 The haughtiest despot e'er disgrac'd a crown †:
 Yet leave a state, emerging just from thrall,
 Beneath oppression's cruel fangs to fall;
 Permit a lawless tyrant to bereave,
 Of their just rights, a Prince and people brave,
 Whose gen'rous struggles to break off their chains,
 Record it, Fame, no barb'rous deed once stains,
 No threat'ning insult of the Pow'rs that be,---
 Content, if left to share their Liberty!!

A Neighbour-Prince †, to whom of right belongs
 These to redress, could witness all their wrongs,
 In danger's hour refuse the promis'd aid,---
 The league evade which he himself had made!
 Let odium prove each callous tyrant's lot,
 And in earth's annals let his mem'ry rot!
 On Court-intrigues, eternal shame be cast,
 O Heav'n! how long shall proud oppression last?

While Despots rouse their vassal-troops to arms,
 And threaten Europe with their dread alarms,

witness this disgraceful and horrid depredation, without even a remonstrance, or disavowal of their approbation of the measure; tho' it sets a precedent which threatens the liberty and independence of every state in Europe. The author does not mean to decide on the propriety of our late interference in the dispute between Russia and the Porte, by referring to it above, tho' it has no doubt met the censures and opposition of the Minority in Parliament. He would only infer from our conduct on that occasion, whatever might be the reasons and motives of it, the apparent impropriety, and even impolicy of permitting Poland to be subjugated, and afterwards seized by foreign Powers, without once offering to plead their cause, tho' the *balance of power*, that political hobby-horse, which hath so often produced blood, wars and bickerings, was in imminent danger.

† The above observation is not meant to be restricted to the present Emperor in particular, who may be no worse than his predecessors, but to the despotic nature of the Turkish government in general, under which millions of the human race have for ages groaned; while every thing dear in life lies at the mercy of a set of men who acknowledge no law but their own arbitrary will. The light of Truth will yet pervade their darkest shades, and dissolve their servile chains: for truth is powerful, and will in time prevail over all the opposition Despotism can make.

† The King of Prussia.

My Muse, reply, can you the reason find?
 Is this war kind'd 'gainst the human kind?
 Does it attack the sacred rights of man,
 While breath of Courts its flames devouring fan?
 The muse suggests,—Tho' pow'r may now amerce, 50
 Yet pow'r cannot the reason long suppress;
 Historic page will yet the truth unveil,
 For truth is powerful, and will prevail.
 Such as to Freedom force combin'd oppose,
 Mankind must view as their invet'rate foes, 55
 When once their eyes are open'd on their state,
 And tyrants meet their too well-earned fate.
 The bold attempt not rare procur'd hath shame,
 Nor shall redound to its abettors fame.

In vain did Brunswick, and proud Austria rave, 60
 Since Heav'n no longer Gallia would enslave,
 Did on their arms and threats confusion pour,
 While their proud triumph lasted but an hour.
 Her sons exclaim—exclaim with dying breath,
 Frenchmen, be yours or Liberty or Death! 65
 These Pow'rs unite in order to restore,
 What God did threaten to destroy of yore;
 Unite to place oppression on a throne,
 And superstition where long felt and known;
 That State and Church, united, might defy, 70
 The beams of Truth, and throws of Liberty.
 This to secure, shall Britain succour lend,
 And not have cause to sorrow in the end?
 Are we the sons of the old Sire at Rome,
 That we must arm to shield him from his doom; 75
 League with those Pow'rs, who aid and plead his cause,
 Tho' at the risk of breaking Heaven's laws?
 To prosper here a curse from God might prove,
 While to miscarry would evince his love.

When haughty Princes keenly thus combine, 80
 As if embarked in a cause Divine,
 To crush fair Freedom in her struggling rise,
 And so wage war against the ruling Skies;
 Almighty King! say, "Hither shall ye come,
 And here you'll find your too well-earned doom!"

" I fix the bound o'er which you cannot pass,
 " Ye lawless lords, 'gainst me you thus transgress.
 " I can at pleasure catch you with my hook,
 " Turn with my rein†, or slay with my rebuke;
 " For earth's each tyrant I at will can bind,
 " In me a foe they soon or late shall find.

8;
" Be

† The retreat of the combined Powers last year reminds one of the message God sent by his prophet, to a boasting tyrant of old: " Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult is come up into mine ears: therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way by which thou camest," Isa. 37. 29. Previous to that retreat, was literally fulfilled what God threatens by another prophet; " I have taken away your horses, and I have made the stink of your camps to come up into your nostrils;" and the partition of Poland shews there is reason to add, " Yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord," Amos 4. 10. On that occasion, the seasonable interpretation of Providence was too obvious to be denied; and the same may be repeated, notwithstanding all the infidelity of France.

The Reader needs scarce be told that the above paragraph in the poem, was written when the King of Prussia, and the Duke of Brunswick marched their troops into France, and published manifestoes so descriptive of the most degrading tyranny; at which time the affairs of that nation wore a very gloomy aspect. Every Briton, worthy of the name, must have felt his bosom burn with indignation at such an outrage on the rights of a free nation, and the claims of humanity: for their ostensible object was to restore the ancient government in Church and State, and their infamous, gasconading manifestoes left no alternative between implicit submission, and being put to the sword. Under the impression produced by such conduct, the author wrote part of this Poem, which may account for what some may deem severe against the despots of the earth, who are content to trample on the rights of human nature, if they can only maintain and enlarge their own undue authority. Should any take occasion hence to suppose that the author is an enemy to kingly government, or friendly to the republican system, he is mightily mistaken; for there is a material difference betwixt reprobating the abuse, or perversion of a thing, and reprobating that thing in itself, or the lawful exercise of it. Our late accession to the cause referred to above, gave occasion to some lines in transcribing, and the author is neither ashamed nor afraid to declare his regret, that we should so long keep such company as will in the issue bring us neither honour nor advantage: for it is entirely owing to that coalition that we come now to be involved in a charge originally intended against other powers; for when the principal part of this poem was written, we took no part, at least ostensibly, in the crusade against France.

" Be timely wise, lest I contempt should pour,
 " On all your state, in one ill-fated hour;
 " For soon can I most terrible appear, 90
 " To those who sceptres, crowns and purple wear;
 " Can make them base as earth on which they tread,
 " Whence mark the fate of many a crowned-head,
 " Since Pharaoh proud, who 'gainst me did conspire,
 " To the last tyrant that hath felt mine ire:
 " For nature's Lord, invincible in fight, 95
 " Shall strike thro' kings, and all their boasted might,
 " And them o'erwhelm with one eternal night;
 " Should they in pride, and vain ambition soar,
 " Their pow'r abuse, their Sov'reign not adore.*

O! that the great would bear this truth in mind, 100
 That earth's whole greatness soon a bound shall find;
 That wealth and honours to the grave but lead,
 Where sink alike the slave and crowned head;
 Where disappear the gaudy scenes of courts,
 And Death with titles, and with greatness sports! 105
 O! that they sought true honours from above,
 The seat of peace, of purity, and love,
 Where all, in dignity, are kings to God,
 And serve as priests in his sublime abode! 110
 This kept in view, what peace o'er earth would reign!
 What mutual love, to banish human pain!

Ere long the petty despots of the plain,—
 Who treat their vassals with a proud disdain,
 With all the tribe of tyrants high and low,
 Who seek their pleasures by a Brother's woe; 115
 Whose rich possessions, and acquired store,
 Is but a tribute fleeced from the poor;—

Of

* Let the rulers of the earth bear in mind, that God is King of kings and Lord of lords, who has an indispenfible claim to their loyalty and obediencce. If they rule not in his fear, according to his laws, and for his glory, they may expect to feel the terrors of his wrath. " Be wise, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him." Psal. 2.

Of keen remorse shall prove the abject prey,
 When they, with int'rest, must the whole repay.
 Deaf to the cries of hunger and distress, 120
 'The poor and needy they could still oppress,
 As if their Maker to their wrongs were blind,
 And them deny'd the feelings of our kind;—
 They too shall cry, but cry for aid in vain,
 When God shall treat their persons with disdain. 125
 The Pow'r supreme, whose kingdom rules o'er all,
 Whose are each people on the earthly ball,
 Says, Hence oppressors shall pervade no more
 Their land, I've seen the ills they much deplore;
 And will their wrongs, and grievances redress,—130
 Hear this, ye proud, that your own race oppress.
 Believe, your Judge will yet such deeds repay,
 When once o'ertake you shall your judgment day.

To Him, what all the pow'rs that rule on earth,
 Who can at will remand their vital breath; 135
 Their naked souls then summon to his bar,
 And them from blifs for ever banish far;
 Who can to despots from his Throne above,
 Array'd with justice, far more dreadful prove,
 Than they in wrath can to their meanest thrall, 140
 Who at their foot-stool may in terror fall†.

Man may forget his latter end—the tomb,
 And banish from his thoughts the final doom;
 But Death and Judgment will one day appear,
 And to the guilty countless horrors wear. 145
 The day is fix'd—the dread decisive day,
 Which shall the justice of our Judge display;
 Their fate determine who his laws despise,
 Before assembled sons of earth and skies.
 Ye who oppress, or injure human kind, 150
 On this great day your just reward shall find.
 Th' oppressed's Judge, to whom revenge belongs,
 Shall then shine forth avenging all their wrongs.

Proud

† He shall cut off the spirit of princes: he is terrible to the kings
 of the earth. Psal. 76. 12.

Proud Europeans Afric's sons who thrall'd,
 With these confronted, shall be quite appal'd, 155
 When all their deeds are weigh'd in equal scale,
 And retributive justice shall prevail.
 Ye servile tyrants of the British isle,
 Who all our coasts with human blood defile,
 Incur of guilt an awful, pond'rous load, 160
 Prepare to meet your mighty Judge and God.
 Believe the day—the great avenging day,
 Will Heav'n's dread terrors'gainst your crimes display;
 If not remitted, into hell you turn,
 Where you for ever shall be left to mourn. 165
 The slave and lord shall then on par appear,
 Nor this, nor that his past condition bear.

Ye wretched captives of base avarice' slaves,
 Trust in that Lord who the oppressed saves;
 Will make them triumph o'er their haughty foes, 170
 Who at his coming shall be drunk with woes.
 Not clime or hue regards the Pow'r on high,
 'Tis inward worth attracts his gracious eye.
 At his dread bar, who form'd the human race,
 The Peer may quake, his vassal yet find grace. 175
 There kings and rulers, with the poor, must stand,
 Their doom receive from his Almighty hand;
 When birth, nor grandeur favour can procure,
 Who can the terrors of that day endure†?

On this reflect, ye who in war delight, 180
 How shall you then support the awful fight,
 When those who fell before their time shall stand,
 And vengeance due on you their foes demand?
 What men term war, too oft in God's pure eye,
 Is Murder! Murder of the deepest die; 185
 Which on a land brings guiltless blood in store,
 For which one time shall myriads sad deplore:
 For foes oppos'd cannot both justice claim,
 One side at least must surely merit blame.

Let

† Neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath. Zeph. 1. 18.

Let statesmen weigh the cause in equal scale, 190
 And no base motive with them once prevail;
 Then shall mankind the scourge of war rare feel,
 While precious peace promotes the public weal.

Kind Heav'n! ward off the dreadful scourge of war,
 From all our coasts, O keep it distant far! 195

Of human blood the sad effusion check,
 On its dire fruits lead Statesmen to reflect!

Tho' guilt abound within Britannia's coast,
 And we are prone of flesh's frail arm to boast;
 Yet us chastise not with deserved ire, 200

Ah! who can bear this? it consumes like fire.

Thou righteous art, because our sins increase,
 In leaving war to gorge the fruits of peace;

This hideous fury raging, to march forth,
 Like chilling tempests from the frozen north, 205

With countless evils in her horrid train,
 All fraught with pow'r the human heart to pain.

Shall Britain 'scape of these the earned share?

No:—Heav'n hath said,—Your sins for these prepare,

Tho' potent, vaunt not, Britain, of thy strength,
 A worm corrodes, and may consume at length. 210

Thy fairest prospects soon may disappear,

What fatal events happen in a year!

Our God provok'd, may soon our glory stain,

Since guilt abounds, and myriads count it gain. 215

'Tis this makes warriors bleed, their kindred mourn,

While war's dread flames with wasting fury burn.

Sin points the piece, and whets the fatal steel,

The source of all the ills we dread or feel.

Thy guilt, Britannia, oft hath kindled war, 220

Which bane, may Heav'n from thy coasts banish far,

Give skill to those who steer the vessel's helm,

That founder not in this abyss our realm!

Have not the rowers into depths us brought†,

If fame be true, these depths design'dly fought? 225

“ Be

† Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters: the east-
 wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas, Ezek 27. 26.

" Be wise, ye Britons, still averse to wage
 " War with the nations, or their ire enrage;
 " For conquest may not always crown your arms,
 " Nor states be aw'd by all your loud alarms.
 " Peace, peace alone can your blest state restore, 230
 " Repair the losses you have borne before;
 " Extend your commerce, and your *load* decrease,
 " Whence prize and cherish all the means of peace.
 " Tho' conquest should her laurels still bestow,
 " Make Britain triumph o'er her ev'ry foe; 235
 " Yet o'er the spoils Humanity must wail,
 " While thousands perish as her arms prevail.
 " Not war---but Science can a state adorn,
 " Impart true fame, add lustre to a throne.
 " To this Britannia greater glory owes, 240
 " Than to her num'rous triumphs o'er her foes.
 " Her Classic page her more renown will gain,
 " Than all her battles on the hostile plain :
 " For ~~reds~~ heroic with the brave would die, 245
 " Did Science not aid, and time's stern pow'r defy"†.
 Not

† The above extract is taken from a work lately published, entitled "A Monitory Address to Great Britain," respecting our prevailing iniquities, and the just displeasure of God already manifested on that account, and which we have farther reason to dread, if not speedily forsaken. It is much to be wished the prevailing spirit of the times would permit our attending to such seasonable admonitions to reform our manners, and so prevent our impending doom. Heaven forbid we should be yet arrived at such a stage of infidelity and vice as will make admonitions, however necessary, and seasonable, equally unwelcome and ineffectual!—such a stage as may provoke God to deny his blessing to any attempts to promote our reformation, and his ear to the prayers of those that dread the effects of his displeasure, and daily deprecate impending wrath. To such a pass, however, were things brought in ancient Israel, as we learn from their history; and their character and fate are held up in Scripture for our admonition and warning. The following lines from that production, have been but too soon and literally verified; and time may discover that the author's apprehensions in other respects are too well founded.—

Thy Commerce, Britain, is a spreading gourd,
 Which seems a lasting shelter to afford;
 Yet, ah! a worm in secret gnaws the root,
 The breath of Heav'n can blast its fairest fruit.

Not war, but Peace can raise a People's head,
 Whence still pursue the means to peace that lead;
 Nor still your feuds with neighbour states prolong,—
 The Battle is not always to the strong.
 Nay, partial success oft a snare doth prove, 250
 In tracts precarious war delights to move; - (paign,
 Whence those are crush'd, when clos'd the long campaign,
 Who, flush'd with hope, their foes did oft disdain.
 Let those not then, who gird their harness on,
 Exulting boast, as who the cause have won. 255
 War can but add to our too grievous load †,
 Waste blood and treasure, and offend our God;

Increase

† That the immense load of our national debt hath rapidly increased, by the wars in which we have been at different times unhappily involved, is increasing, and will still increase while present measures are prosecuted, and existing abuses perpetuated, will appear from the following statement of its progress from the year 1739, to the year 1786.

	Capital.	Interest.
Before the war in 1740, the debt was	46,382,650—	1,903,961
In 1749, after the war,	78,166,906—	2,765,608
Increased by nine years of war,	31,784,256—	861,747
Diminished by eight years of peace,	3,089,641—	111,590
Amount at the beginning of the war in the year 1755, }	75,077,264—	2,654,018
At the end of the war in 1763,	146,582,844—	4,840,811
Increased by eight years of war,	71,505,580—	2,186,803
Reduced by twelve years of peace,	10,639,793—	400,000
Amount in 1775,	135,943,051—	4,440,811
Amount in 1786, three years after the conclusion of the American war }	266,725,097—	9,536,016
Increased by the American war,	130,782,046—	5,095,205

To the above might be added the sums expended on the Russian armament, the Nootka sound armament, and the eight millions borrowed by the minister, at the high interest of eight per cent. which is but an item to what the war may yet cost, and the injury it has already done to commerce and public credit; all which must be placed to the account of the nation. Previous to the period at which the above account commences, one of the most successful wars that Britain ever waged, and to her arms the most glorious, viz. that carried on by Queen Anne and her allies against Louis XIV. was yet productive of serious consequences to the nation, both in respect of men and treasure. The siege and taking of one of the frontier towns of France, cost her famous general the Duke

Increase our guilt, bring blood on us in store,
Of which, alas! our Land is full before†;---

F

A

of Marlborough, the lives of 20,000 Britons. When peace was restored, the national debt, which at the commencement of the war amounted only to L. 16,394,701, had increased to L. 53,681,176, an enormous sum in those days. If the advantages of the most prosperous war cannot counterbalance the losses that must unavoidably attend it, what must be the consequences of a disastrous war, one month of which may expend more than the economy of years can save, tho' commerce should flourish, as appears from the sum we have been able to pay off since peace was made with America, contrasted with that expended during the war?

Tho' our boasted commerce should extend and flourish (thro' the continuance of peace, without which it is impossible it should long flourish) even for an age to come, instead of suffering a defalcation, or occasional interruptions, the interest of the load of public debt already contracted, with the current expenses of each year, will at least keep pace with our revenue. But war will ever increase the burdens of the Public, while it destroys the means either of bearing or abating them; whence it is madness to dream that our resources will always bear proportion to our demands. Every thing hath its limits beyond which it cannot be pushed with safety.

Did not gross abuses of one kind or other prevail, which a shorter duration of Parliament, and a more adequate representation of the People, agreeable to the British Constitution, might have prevented, the Nation would not at present be saddled with such an enormous burden. But there are not a few whose interest it is that these should still prevail, which accounts for the clamours of some against every attempt to reform them; for that patriotism, which prefers the prosperity of one's Country at large to private emolument, is rarely found among minions and Court-dependents. In the natural world, a certain vermine owe their very existence to corruption, live by it, and perish when it fails them; their degraded rank in the scale of being rendering them unfit to subsist any where else.

Those gentlemen who were lately so forward to publish their resolutions to the world, approving of the present war with France, and promising to support Government in prosecuting it, both with their fortunes and their lives, should have doubtless shewed so much regard to their plighted faith, as to step forth to support the Minister, and not leave him at the very commencement of the war under the disagreeable necessity of borrowing eight millions sterling at the enormous interest of L. 8 per cent.: for to this they were the rather bound, because Ministry relying on their promises, and taking their declarations for the voice of the Country in general, were induced, perhaps with too little precaution, to enter into an unpopular war, that will in all probability add neither to our

same

A load more vast than all our public debt;
May Heav'n propitious the dread sum remit!

260

States

same nor prosperity. But these patriots love their money as well as those who have all along disapproved of the present hostile system, and are content with their own share of the burden it must occasion. Perhaps, however, if not levelled by their favourite measure, that they have been as good as their word, and hence have their zeal rewarded by the boon of L.8 per cent. for their money, while commerce cannot yield one. The happy fruits of the war, setting aside the effusion of human blood, may be seen in the shock given to public credit, by which many thousands are thrown out of employment, and their families reduced to extreme want. We have been assured, that from the first of January to the 18th of May, no fewer than 642 Commissions of Bankruptcy have appeared in the Gazette; which amounted to many millions, indeed to a sum much greater than all the specie at present in the nation. But to compensate for this, a few popular things are done; and among the rest, the poor North Britons are eased of L.10,000 or L.12,000 coal-duty, while in lieu, to prevent the fatal effects of intoxication among them, their Distillery is assailed with the additional burden of L.100,000. Were not this tax confined to one part of the nation, and of course partial and invidious in its operation, it might be tolerable. But it befriends our morale, and consults our domestic felicity, and therefore should be gratefully borne.

Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.

But it is good policy, say some, not only to increase our taxes, but also to borrow as much money on Government-credit as possible, because, let their measures be what they will, this will infallibly secure the support of the lenders, and all their friends, lest by any change in the mode of administration, their security should suffer. Be it so, but why should we not have some mercy on Posterity? The Parents, saith the Apostle, should lay up for the children, and not the children for the parents. It will be granted, that he does not mean, Parents should saddle their children with debts. Why then should we reverse this axiom, by laying up for generations to come an accumulating load of public debt (I wish I could except our public guilt) a load which they can never exhaust, tho' they should add nothing to the score? Such an inheritance will afford them little reason to bless the memory of those who have entailed it upon them, and their children's children, probably till the sound of the last jubilee trumpet announce the discharge of this debt, or cancel the bonds of the creditors. Is it safe or honourable in states, to resemble spendthrift heirs, who borrow at every hand while confidence can lend, perhaps at an extravagant rate; because, forsooth, they neither mean nor expect to repay the principal? May not Posterity have occasion to borrow as well as we? nay, if they copy our example, will they not find themselves

under

States for their guilt, their rulers often change,
 Experience vicissitudes most strange;
 Become the seat of anarchy and strife,
 While are expos'd both property and life. 265
 Yet nations Ruler o'er their broils presides,
 And people's tumults by his wisdom guides;
 Extracting good from each apparent ill,
 And giving effect to his sov'reign will.
 No human crime can frustrate his design, 270
 Who works thro' all with energy divine;
 Not rare employs ev'n foes to plead his cause,
 And recompence the insults of his laws.
 No service done him or by friend or foe,
 Shall its reward in Providence forego. 275

The Revolution; in the states of earth,
 Which have of late to events strange giv'n birth,

F 2

If

under the dire necessity of doing it, if in their power? Why then should we pre-occupy them, by binding on their shoulders a grievous burden, which neither we ourselves, nor our fathers were well able to bear? Do we envy them the power of making one single crusade? or is it because we think the world will terminate with ourselves, or that we are quite unconcerned about the happiness of our descendants?

† What an eminent prophet, or rather God by him, said of the Jewish nation, applies, alas! but too well to our own. Only substitute Britain and Ireland in place of the House of Israel and Judah, and let the Reader say it God, the immediate witness, and impartial Judge of our national conduct, may not bring the same charge against ourselves. "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah, of Britain and Ireland, is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not." Ezek. 9. 9. The threatening which God subjoins was awfully verified in the experience of that nation, as appears from their history; "As for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; but I will recompence their way upon their head." Who can tell but he may have already said the same of us? The decree once passed will not fail to bring forth. The word once gone out of his mouth, shall not return void. Such as believe there is a God in heaven, who rules as Governor among the nations, will not treat this consideration lightly, seeing there is so much cause; and as for the numerous tribes of infidels, their approaching fate will effectually convince them of what they will not now believe, and to this we must refer them.

If own'd of God, what force can them oppose?
 Who this attempt but hasten their own woes.
 If He once work, who can with-hold his hand? 280
 Combined Pow'rs cannot his Will withstand.
 If He concur not, ruin soon they find,
 Without the hostile aid of human kind.

Let nations know that He of kings is King,
 Before whose Face they're both an empty thing; 285
 But like the dust that cleaveth to the scale,
 What can their force against *his pow'r* avail?

The human race from his watch-tow'r on high,
 Appear like grasshoppers before his eye.
 Their broils and bustle sim'lar feats display, 290

As would to us an emmet throng or fray.
 From all the contests that arise on earth,
 Whatever motives influence their birth,
 His sov'reign will without control be done,
 O'er ev'ry clime enlighten'd by the sun! 295

While nations own him as their Lord and King,
 And earthly Pow'rs their tribute to Him bring.

When these bear sway according to his laws,
 Approv'd of Him, men will give due applause:
 But when they rule, their pow'r extend, at will, 300
 Oppress the good, promote and shield the ill;
 Their reign a scourge to human kind shall prove.
 And be detested by the Pow'r above.

Thom. Paine may slander Royalty's proud line,
 And urge that Commonweals have right divine;
 But tyrants are the brood that level kings, 305
 And tell the world, These all are noxious things;--
 Fierce beasts of prey that fail not to devour,
 When once their booty is within their pow'r.

The G---m-n t---g---rs, and the R---fl---n b---r, 310
 On that big name a lasting blot confer;
 With all the perfidies of this grand tribe,
 Whose conscience oft ambitious pow'r can bribe.
 Themselves do more to nullify their sway,
 Than all that *Modern Politics* can say: 315

For State-intrigues, and their illicit art,
 Those weapons forge which wound in time their hearts

Occasion

Occasion woe to myriads of our race,
 Who ne'er possess'd or *pension*, fee or *place*;
 Make Crowns and Sceptres scarce a tempting thing,---
 What prudent man would chuse to be a king? 320

To kings and statesmen, we this truth propose,
 Mankind, *with Freedom lost, all virtue lost*,
 Whence to all ranks she doubtless should be dear,
 Each risk to lose her still excite their fear; 325
 Whence let not pow'r presume in chains to bind,
 The free-born issue of the human mind.

Let reason spec'late unconfin'd and free,
 And all our thoughts be left at liberty. 330

These once controll'd, man proves a knave or fool,
 Let no such edicts pass from wisdom's school.

Grant, ev'ry boon we share partakes alloy,
 Shall therefore we our ev'ry boon destroy? *

F 3

To

† On the sentiment contained in the above line from *Paradise Lost*, Dr Newton remarks in a note, "Milton every where shows a love of liberty; and here he observes very rightly, that the loss of liberty is soon followed by the loss of all virtue and religion. There are such sentiments (adds he) in several parts of his prose works, as well as in Aristotle and other masters of politics." The passage in its connection is part of Michael's address in vision to our first Parent, and runs thus—

—————Those whom last thou saw'st
 In triumph and luxurious wealth, are they
 First seen in acts of prowess eminent,
 And great exploits; but of true virtue void:
 Who having spilt much blood, and done much waste,
 Subduing nations, and achiev'd thereby
 Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey,
 Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth,
 Surfeit, and lust, till wantonness and pride
 Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in peace.
 The conquer'd also, and enslav'd by war,
 Shall, *with their freedom lost, all virtue lose,*
 And fear of God.

PARADISE LOST, B. XI.

* The author here alludes to the freedom of the Press, that pædium of British liberty, to restrict which several bold attempts have of late been made. These seem to argue a consciousness of something amiss, that cannot bear investigation; for where this is not the case, there is nothing to be dreaded from paper-shot. This privilege,

To none can truth a noxious Libel prove,
 Whose deeds are sanction'd by the Pow'r above; 335
 Who wills that men should all their pow'rs employ,
 T' assert her rights, would they her fruits enjoy.
 Her sanction Truth from earthly Courts ne'er draws,
 Nor can be fetter'd--no, by human laws,
 Which ne'er should fix a padlock on the mind,--- 340
 'Tis God's alone the inner man to bind.
 When rulers govern by the gen'ral will,
 For public good their civil trust fulfill,
 Their worthy deeds to all endear their name,
 And shall secure them justly earned fame. 345
 When these are virtuous, and with wisdom blest'd,
 Mild in their sway, and of just fame possess'd,
 Beneath their shade the people safe recline,
 And public cares with confidence resign.
 Yet would I ask, and let who will reply, 350
 Who views mankind with an impartial eye,
 Are these the fittest ever to preside,
 With virtue blest'd, and wisdom too, to guide,
 Who, self-elected, rise above their peers,
 As, ah! not rare in Britain's isle appears; 355
 Amidst proud boasts of peerless liberty,
 'The equal boon of men of each degree †?

'Tis

privilege, no doubt, like every other, may be, and hath been abused; but the evils arising from its abuse, are not once to be compared with those which must flow from its restriction or disuse. But thanks to the trial of a Paine for producing such an able defence of the liberty of the Press, as must have a friendly influence on the genuine principles of British freedom. Thus may every effort to abridge the rights of men, serve eventually to enlarge and establish them!—

† Unblest by virtue, government a league
 Becomes, a circling junto of the great,
 To rob by law; religion mild, a yoke
 To tame the stooping soul, a trick of state
 To mask their rapine, and to share the prey.
 What are without it Senates, but a farce
 Of consultation deep, and reason free;
 While the determin'd voice and heart are sold?
 What boasted Freedom, but a sounding name?

And

'Tis from the people rightful Pow'rs arise,
Which govern must according to the Skies;
Whose laws transgress'd, illicit is their sway, 360
And Heav'n shall frown, while fellow men obey.

May ne'er such deeds disgrace our George's reign.
As oft, too oft the sway of princes stain,
'That he may rule a People great and free,
Who giving, share the boon of Liberty; 365
That Britain henceforth no such shock once feel,
As lately have made states and empires reel!
May Peace and Plenty long our Island bless,
As fruits of Piety and Righteousness;
While vice each where conceals her odious head, 370
And none in pow'r are found her cause to plead!

May Kings and Rulers learn the happy art,
Of bearing sway still in their People's heart;---
Learn too, to live in peace with one another,
'That none henceforth wage war against his Brother!
'That this fell scourge our race no more infect, 375
Ah! when shall men from this destroyer rest;
'Their *murderous* swords † converted to plough-shares,
And pruning hooks form'd of their hostile spears!
Ah?

And what Election, but a market vile,
Of Slaves self-barter'd? _____
Man knows no master save creating Heav'n,
Or those whom choice and common good ordain.

THOMSON.

To those alluded to by the poet may be applied what a prophet hath said of the Chaldeans, "their judgment and their dignity shall proceed of themselves." Hab. i. 7.

† By the above phrase the author does not mean to condemn war indiscriminately, for cases may occur in which it is unavoidable on honourable terms, and of course, just and necessary. In no war however can both parties have justice on their side, tho' both may indeed be wrong; whence the phrase *murderous swords*, as applied to war in general, is and must be justifiable, without ascertaining on whose side justice is, in any particular case. The reasons authorising war on any occasion, must be such as will justify the Party aggressing in the sight both of God and man: for no formalities or political expediency can justify that in the conduct of one independent state towards another, which is repugnant to the precepts of morality,

Ah! when shall state rise against state no more, 380
 Nor fleets invade an unoffending shore?
 Ill men remove from presence of each king,
 Their wicked counsels, Lord, to nothing bring;
 Then shall their thrones on righteous bases stand,
 And peace, and wealth, and plenty crown their land!
 Ye Rulers, imitate the King above, 385
 And let your deeds to men attest your love.
 He left a pattern to the great and brave,
 In coming to destroy life? No, to save.
 The blood of subjects in his sight is dear†: 390
 He in his bottle puts their ev'ry tear.
 Confound not then your subjects with your foes,
 Nor them to danger without cause expose.

Don't

morality, or the laws of the Christian religion, and would be criminal in the conduct of individuals.

To constitute war just and equitable, it is not enough that the object in view be of such magnitude as to warrant an appeal to the sword, without which it would be sporting with the lives and dearest rights of men, and bartering them for a thing of small moment; every eligible mean must be also previously tried, in order, if possible, to accommodate matters without having recourse to hostile measures, which should be the very last expedient, and adopted only after every other fails. The author of an Elegy, said to have been written on the plain of Fontenoy, some time after that fatal battle had been fought, which cost many a valiant Briton his life, seems to have been of the opinion that war, as generally conducted, is a murderous or bloody trade, as appears from the following stanzas.

Yes, the time was, nor very far the date,
 When carnage here her crimson toil began;
 When nations' standards wav'd in threat'ning state,
 And Man the murd'rer met the murd'rer Man.

For War is Murder, tho' the voice of Kings
 Has styl'd it Justice, styl'd it Glory too,
 Yet from worse motives, fierce ambition springs,
 And there, fix'd prejudice is all we view!

From barb'rous *Turkey* to *Britannia's* shore,
 Opposing int'rests into rage increase;
 Destruction rears her sceptre, tumults roar,
 Ah! where shall hapless man repose in peace?

* Prov. 25. 5.

† Psal. 72.

Don't hurry mortals from the present state,
 In shoals, while unprepar'd to meet their fate; 395
 As if the king of terrors were too slow,
 In thrusting mankind from the world below;
 As if his quiver were exhausted quite,
 Unless you summon mankind to the fight.
 Did we of late detest the death of One†, 400
 That too, because deny'd a second fun;
 And shall we not the fate of myriads mourn,
 Who in a moment drop into their urn;
 By mutual wounds rush to the bar of God,
 Oppress'd with guilt, and all besmear'd with blood?
 Ye Kings and Rulers, who o'er states preside, 405
 Let wisdom, truth, and justice be your guide.
 Ne'er seek more pow'r than aids you to do good,
 Of this possess'd, employ it for your God,
 That millions bless you as their Friend and Sire, 410
 And to prolong your earned fame conspire.
 The more you grasp at pow'r, the less you share;
 The proud attempt may issue in despair:
 For pow'r unbounded none can claim but God,
 Who this usurp, shall not escape his rod, 415
 Whether by open force, or secret art,—
 Whence shun whate'er hath caused others smart.
 While

† Louis, the late unhappy king of France, whose request of three days respite from execution, after the sentence was passed, in order to be prepared for that solemn change, the National Convention saw meet to deny. While we reprobate this part of their conduct, tho' they might have strong reasons to urge for so doing, let us reflect on the many thousands that are hurried into Eternity, without a moment's time to think on the important change, and prepare for it, whose souls are equally precious in the sight of God as the souls of kings. This is the case in all wars, and when kings and cabinets determine upon hostilities, they in effect pass sentence of death on an unknown number of their innocent subjects: but because this is common it is not minded; yet if unnecessary the Lord will require it. In this case, the more signal the victories they obtain over their enemies, and the greater number of them they leave dead on the field of battle, the more do they accumulate their own guilt, and the greater wrath do they treasure up for themselves; a consideration which ought to have its weight with states and statesmen.

While human feelings at the deed recoil,
Which lately did of life a Monarch spoil,
Leteach Crown'd-Head thence found instruction draw,
Regard his oath—regard his Sov'reign's law, 420
Who righteous is in causing some to smart,
Where bias'd men sustain a guilty part.

That God revere, whose name is *King of kings*,
Who to the dust both prince and despot brings: 425
Where come to nought Ambition's soaring schemes,
And fordid Av'rice drops here golden dreams;
Where lawless tyrants vex their kind no more,
And rest alike the wealthy and the poor;
Where prince and peasant on a level lie, 430
Till Time is lost in vast Eternity.

If people smart when kings wrong steps pursue,
To this dread act let these direct their view:
For sim'lar causes like effects produce,
May pow'r ne'er swerve to its direct abuse! 435

O that all kings from past events would learn,
To lend attention to their just concern;
To rule by right, disdaining courtly arts,
And still practising what true fame imparts!
Their Throne secur'd, would then with lustre shine,
And 'neath its shade their People safe recline. 440

Great Washington, thy fame shall deathless prove,
Thy conduct sanction'd by the Pow'r above.
The laurels won still bloom upon thy brow,
Thy worthy deeds from no self-int'rest flow. 445
Prudent and firm thy prowess in the field,
In peace to none thy private virtues yield.
While Despots bow at proud ambition's shrine,
Let Patriot-virtue ever more be thine;
And annals page to latest ages tell, 450
How with thy conquests Despotism fell†.

May

† Without doubt, the Independence of America, to which Washington contributed not a little, paved the way for the late Revolution in France; but how far that may affect the liberty of other nations time will discover. It is much to be wished that God may over-rule it for the spread of Divine knowledge, and the enlargement

May ev'ry state in time of need still find,
 A Washington—the Friend of Human kind;
 And earth's proud tyrants feel soon to their cost,
 That tyranny hath all its supports lost; 455
 That man shall rise, in spite of Freedom's foes,
 To his just claims!—for who can God oppose,
 Who holds the hearts of Rulers in his hand,
 Can make them yield to his supreme command;
 Or if rebellious, in his ire them thrust, 460
 And all their honours level with the dust?

This weighty truth have states felt to their cost,
 And that not rare when loudest was their boast,
 Which timely lay, O Britons! deep to heart,
 Lest Heav'n incens'd should make us all to smart. 465
 When vice triumphant rears her guilty head,
 Uncheck'd by shame, unaw'd by laws or dread;
 When sacred justice is deny'd her claim,
 Oppression left to stain a nation's fame;
 When base corruption rears her head on high, 470
 And perjury defies the ruling Sky;
 Then righteous Heav'n will cease to guard our shore,
 And vengeance merited shall sleep no more.

Say, Albion, say, if crimes do not defile
 Thy coasts each where, tho' a much favour'd isle; 475
 Dæds be not shelter'd underneath thy wings,
 Which still provoke th' Almighty King of kings?
 Ye Statesmen, hear, who at the helm preside,
 Let Truth and Justice be your constant guide;
 Nor more persist in what gives just offence, 480
 Lest you 'gainst us should arm Omnipotence.

The

ment of the sphere of human freedom and happiness; and neither the crimes nor the infidelity of the leading men in that nation forbid us indulging the pleasing hope: for God was pleased to employ Jehu, no very good man, to punish the crimes of the house of Ahab; and to break the power of Popery in Britain by means of a prince remarkable neither for his piety nor continence; and the galling yoke of oppression afterwards by means of one whose sanctity and patriotism some scruple not to call in question. God can work by whom he pleaseth, and when he worketh, who can hinder, or eventually frustrate his intention?

The God on high can soon our glory stain,
 Should we obstruct the spread of Freedom's reign.
 Can aught us shield, should his dire wrath be sent,
 To smite Britannia with due punishment? 485
 What measure now we mete shall He repay,
 Should once arrive our retribution-day;
 When He the balance shall and sword resume,
 Review our justice, and award our doom.
 Survey our sky—collecting clouds appear, 490
 Portending storms—let us JEHOVAH fear;
 Reform our conduct,—ere too late repent,—
 Still mercy spares and some respite is lent.
 In vain we fast, if sin retain its hold,
 And we t' oppress our fellow men are bold; 495
 In vain we ask forgiveness from the Sky,
 If still our deeds insult the Pow'r on high;
 On whom pretensions cannot once impose,
 Whose eyes pervade the hearts of friends and foes.
 He only fasts, who fasts from sinful joys, 500
 And to do good his pow'r and wealth employs;
 Whose ears are open to oppression's cry,
 And hands stretch'd out to grant the poor supply;
 And thus to fast no royal edict needs,
 Which only reach can men's external deeds: 505
 For pow'r and precept are but from above, (move)
 Whence come the aids which hearts to fast must
 Let

† In the above lines, the author had in his eye the beautiful description given of an acceptable fast by the Prophet, while he corrects the mistaken views of the Jews respecting it, and upbraids their abuse of it. "Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seekest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast you find pleasure, and exact all your labours. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it

not

Let ev'ry Briton's loyal bosom feel
The warmest ardor for his Country's weal,

G

Whose

"not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" Isa. chap. 58. Have we fasted agreeable to this sacred rule? Are the bands of wickedness loosed? the heavy burdens undone? the oppressed set at liberty, and every servile yoke broken asunder? To mention no other, the continuance of the Slave trade is a palpable proof of the contrary. If the above description of an acceptable fast to the Lord be admitted, and our late national fast in its nature and fruits compared thereto; dare we say, It must have found acceptance?

In similar language does God speak of this matter by another prophet, Zech. ch. 7. In distress mankind naturally have recourse to religion as their refuge, and what a pity their ignorance of its nature should lead them to abuse or pervert it? The captives at their return from Babylon sent to inquire at the ministers of religion, if they should weep on a certain time, separating themselves, as they had stately done for so many preceding years: for they kept an anniversary fast during their captivity. "Then came the word of the Lord unto the prophet, saying, Speak unto all the people of the land, and to the priests, saying, When ye fasted and mourned, even those seventy years, did ye at all fast unto me, even to me? Should ye not hear the words which the Lord hath cried when Jerusalem was in prosperity, and the cities thereof round about her. Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother: And oppress not the widow, nor the fatherless, the stranger, nor the poor: and let none of you imagine evil against his brother in your heart." These are the things which constitute an acceptable fast in the sight of God, if he be allowed to judge; and these neglected, the stated fasts of the Jews were rejected by him as an abomination. Hence it follows, But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear. Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law, and the words which the Lord hath sent: therefore came a great wrath from the Lord of hosts. Therefore it is come to pass, that as he cried, and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear, saith the Lord. But I scattered them with a whirlwind among the nations." Have we no interest in these things? no ground of fear from these examples of the Divine justice? Are we better or more religious than the Jews? and favoured with fewer advantages? Do we shew mercy and compassions on our brethren, while we sanction and practise a traffic by which they are enslaved and oppressed? If such things were done
in

Whose crimes abounding, threaten us with woe, 510
Which shall o'ertake, tho' long apparent flow.

This

in the green tree—executed upon a nation, every thing considered, far less guilty than we, what shall be done in the dry—in those who are rendered by their crimes fit fuel for the flames of Divine wrath? From these no form of godliness, no bodily exercises of religion shall screen us.

Is it not remarkable, that in Royal edicts enjoining the observance of a general fast, so far as I recollect, the Divine Being should be regarded merely in the character of an absolute Sovereign, without one word of a Saviour, or the necessity of his Mediation, even when imploring forgiveness for multiplied and aggravated offences? Have not earthly kings their officers in waiting, to introduce into the royal presence, which might suggest the propriety of regarding the Son of God, in our addresses to him, tho' the Scriptures were more silent on the head than they are? How can we then hope to succeed, if we seek not access, as these recommend and exemplify, thro' Christ, by one Spirit to the Father, and separate from whom the guilty must find God a consuming fire? Is it not somewhat surprising that the Bishops, these servants of the Crown, who may be supposed to be consulted on such occasions, should not know the way of God more perfectly? A literal compliance with the proclamation, if not quite mistaken with respect to the mode of acceptance with God revealed in Scripture, instead of procuring the Divine favour, and warding off impending judgments, would only increase our guilt and danger: for God will never incline his ear in mercy to any of our guilty race, who call not upon him in the name of the Lord Jesus, the consecrated Mediator between his sacred Majesty and rebellious man, and the appointed Judge of quick and dead; and the very attempt, where his will is made known, will be deemed a gross insult, and punish as a proof of our presumption, and an aggravation of our guilt. He hath expressly told us our duty on this head, and the Liturgy and Articles of the Church of England contain and recommend it; so that ignorance of it is quite inexcusable in a Christian land. To hear the king of Nineveh so express himself in his decree or edict for a general fast, is no way surprising; for he had not access to know better; and therefore he and his people were accepted in observing a fast, so far at least as to avert the impending, threatened destruction, because in this instance they acted up to the light afforded them.

The penalty annexed to the neglect of such edicts rises in a climax from the displeasure of God, supposed to be thereby incurred, to the displeasure of the civil Ruler, and the punishment he may inflict for such conduct. Did not an eminent servant of the Crown incur this penalty on a late occasion, by appropriating, if same be true, the day appointed by Royal authority for a general fast, for a grand entertainment to his friends, who can scarce be supposed to have

This pray'r present to him that rules the spheres,
Who frustrate soon can our well-founded fears;

G 2

Still

have fasted over a well-furnished table and a flowing bowl, or, perhaps, to have made their moderation known to all men. But possibly this may be the usual way Courtiers fast for such events as, in their native consequences, increase the number of places and pensions, tho' at the expence of draining their Country of its blood and treasure. The light of nature, however, taught the Heathen prince referred to above, and his nobles, to fast after a very different manner; but these indeed acted like saints of the first magnitude on that occasion, compared to many of the high-flying pretenders of the present day.

When the prophet, according to the word of the Lord, publicly announced, "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown;" it is added, "the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed, and published thro' Nineveh, (by the decree of the king and his nobles,) saying, Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing; let them not feed, nor drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands. Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" *Jonah, chap. 3.* This proclamation has the merit of originality, and appears at once to be the genuine dictates of the heart, called forth by a dread of the Divine displeasure, and a sense of having merited it; not the hacknied phraseology of office, in which the heart feels itself at ease, and seldom takes any part.

From the above edict or decree of the king of Nineveh, and the great men of his Court, it appears that they viewed reformation of conduct as an essential part of fasting, and indeed the only evidence of its sincerity, without which it is but a solemn farce—a piece of daring mockery of Heaven: "Let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands." Would not this include the breaking off every sinful course, and oppressive measure? include the setting those at liberty, and redressing their wrongs, whom they might have formerly enslaved or oppressed? What was the consequence of their immediate compliance?—why, it is added, "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way: and God repented of the evil that he had said he would do unto them, and he did it not!" It is absolutely certain, that God requires and expects much more of us, than he did from the inhabitants of Nineveh; for it is an invariable rule or maxim of his moral administration, that "unto whomsoever much

Still make us flourish—flourish great and free,
 No nation on the earth so blest as we! 515
 The gifts as men, and Christians now we share,
 On ev'ry Brother of our race confer!
 Our guilt, an awful and increasing debt,
 Of thy great mercy, heav'nly Sire, remit;
 And let all ranks with cordial hearts unite, 520
 To spread true Freedom, and celestial light,
 That sons unborn may hail the happy day,
 When Britain fasted from oppression's sway.
 As nature's God, thy pow'r and grace display,
 Let nations yield to Great Messiah's sway; 525

is given, of him shall much be required;" and that the "servant who knew his Lord's will," or had access to know it, "and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes." If in all the foregoing particulars Christian Britain come far, far short of Heathen Nineveh, may not our Lord address us, as he did the Jews, "The men of Nineveh shall rise up in judgment against this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold a greater than Jonah is here." Awful case! to inflame that wrath which we have been so long treasuring up, by the very means of averting it.

Our Lord reproaches (Matt. 23.) the Scribes and Pharisees, who claimed right to sit in Moses' seat, with having recourse to the sanctuary of religion merely the better to veil their own rapacity, and secure the good opinion of the multitude; *woe unto you; for ye devour widows houses, and for a pretence make long prayers.* Another part of the charge against them was, That they bound heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and laid them on men's shoulders; but they themselves would not move them with one of their fingers. Among other traits in their character, a sovereign contempt of the people at large was one; even while they employed the meanest expedients to pacify their discontents, and secure their favour. *These people that know not the law, are accursed.* These, and the like things, with which they were chargeable, extorted from the Saviour that severe and dreadful doom; *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* But, alas! his admonitions were lost upon them and that generation, whence his threatenings in due time all took effect: and is it not to be feared they were not singular?

May the rulers of the earth be preserved from following their example, that they involve not themselves and their subjects in similar plagues!

His joyful tidings of Salvation run,
 Wide as the cheering empire of the sun!
 May sons and daughters ev'ry where be born,
 Whose worthy lives his Gospel shall adorn;
 While Afric's tribes, from thralldom's yoke set free,
 Rise 'mong the nations to their just degree; 530
 Enjoy the blifs of his celestial ray,
 Maturing still for the bright climes of day!

With eyes benignant still behold our Isle,
 And peaceful nature round us make to smile;
 While all our sons are happy, wise, and free, 535
 Adorn at home, abroad give Liberty;
 While welcome peace extends her olive bough,
 And we to Friends convert our ev'ry foe!

Intestine discord from us banish far,
 Nor let our ears be stunn'd with noise of war. 540

Great Pow'r, who nature into being spoke,
 Afunder break each fell Satanic yoke;
 Reform our manners,—Church and State reform,
 And so ward off the dread impending storm;
 That nought tyrannic either may disgrace, 545
 That men of virtue be the men in place.

That Freedom grant, which none but Thou can give,
 That made thy subjects, men to Thee may live!

O'er ev'ry heart extend her sacred sway,
 'Tis done, O Lord, if thou the word but say. 550

With God concur, men's sons of each degree,
 To forward human blifs and liberty.

Deem it your duty, and your honour too,
 Each servile yoke and burden to undo;

That you may prove the friends of human kind, 555
 Who in you guardians—benefactors find.

Firmly unite, ye kindred sons of worth,
 To banish servitude from off the earth.

With wisdom let Philanthropy take part,
 And so approve the head and feeling heart. 560

For this great end, let ev'ry rank combine,
 While virtue links each fair and great design;

Britannia's weal, let this be kept in view,
 Nor myriads suffer to enrich a few;

Left swift destruction seize both Church and State,
 Our crimes to punish—so decreed by fate: 565
 Left vengeance rous'd, in dread array come forth,
 Like the black whirlwinds of the fullen north;
 And so a twofold, dreadful stroke be given,
 Because we still offend the God of heaven; 570
 "Who views with equal eye, as Lord of all,
 "A hero perish, or a sparrow fall,
 "Atoms, or systems into ruin hurl'd,
 "And now a bubble burst, and now a world."
 'Tis God incens'd that empires does o'erthrow, 575
 To his just wrath these their destruction owe.
 Heav'n-daring sins unerring tokens yield,
 That mercy soon will cease a land to shield:
 For these abounding, rouse Almighty ire,
 And waste a realm as with consuming fire. 580

STANZAS

S T A N Z A S

ON THE

*Execution of a NEGRO, at Spanish-town, Jamaica,
August 1785*.*

WHEN Brutus struck the fatal steel
Through the Imperial Cæsar's breast,
The glorious deed, the patriot's zeal,
Stood thro' the subject world confess'd.
Nor yet has time destroy'd the name,
Impartial ages love to praise;
In story brightly shines his fame,
Immortal as the poet's lays.
Yet Brutus stabb'd a gen'rous heart,
In whose affections fast he grew;
To whom he ow'd a filial part,
It was a parent Brutus slew.
He never felt the galling chain,
The lash that lacerates the slave;
But favours (all conferr'd in vain)
Were the sole fetters Cæsar gave!

But

* This unhappy man (says the author Capt. Marjoribanks) had run off the estate to which he belonged. Having been some time afterwards met by one of the book-keepers, who attempted to seize him, a struggle ensued, in which the white man was killed.

The name of *Azubal* (subjoins he) is fictitious; I wish I could add also that the circumstances are imaginary. But these verses were actually written a few days after the execution of a Negro, who was roasted to death at a slow fire on the race-course near Spanish-town, for the crime before mentioned. Of the many strong arguments which have been urged in favour of the abolition of the Slave-Trade, one of the most obvious and incontrovertible, is surely this: That the constant importation of savage and untamed spirits into the islands, not only subjects the white inhabitants to frequent alarm, danger, and sometimes death itself (to which they are seldom or never exposed from the Creole Negroes); but also affords the plea of necessity to punishments the most shocking to humanity, and highly disgraceful to the colonies of a civilized nation.

But see! poor Azubal in torments dies!
 At which my soul in agonies recoils!
 See how he writhes! Ah hear his horrid cries!
 Whilst with slow cruelty the furnace broils!
 Say, what was Azubal's atrocious crime,
 Compar'd to Brutus' celebrated deed?
 (Candour regards no colour and no clime;
 And Freedom smiles as oft as tyrants bleed!)

No friendly bosom did he wound;
 No acts of kindness had he known;
 Compell'd to till a foreign ground,
 For ever exil'd from his own!
 Still agonising mem'ry drew
 The sweets that bless'd his Afric's shore;
 The days of slumb'ring ease he knew;
 The friends he must behold no more!
 Indignant still recalls the day
 European ruffians first drew near;
 When, vainly struggling, forc'd away
 From all that ever could be dear!
 Beneath reluctant labour faint,
 Say what reward awaits his pains?
 'The whip's the solace of his plaint;
 And rest is granted but in chains!

Ideal loss of Liberty inspir'd
 The haughty Roman to destroy his friend;
 But keener injuries the Negro fir'd
 To end a tyrant, and to kill a fiend.
 Brutus still seems a parricide to me,
 And Reason gives reluctantly applause;
 But to poor Azubal my praise is free,
 Who boldly perish'd in a juster cause.

A
S U B J E C T
FOR
CONVERSATION AND REFLECTION
AT THE
TEA TABLE.

THE following beautiful pieces are the production of the pen of our deservedly admired, and most charming poet, MR. COWPER. The genuine poetic pathos they display, and the ardent love of freedom with which they glow, cannot fail of awakening the sympathy, and engaging the attention, of the benevolent admirers of the muses.

When we take a survey of the benefits we derive from the universal commerce carried on between distant nations, and notice its natural tendency to unite together in one grand whole, under one common parent, all the kindreds of the earth, we cannot but admire the wisdom of that Being who so governs and over-rules the passions and interested views of men, as to render these the means of his bestowing most extensive blessings on the human race. But when, in the progress of this survey, and after having contemplated with pleasure and exultation the manifold diffusive advantages which by such means are enriching and felicitating the nations of the earth, from pole to pole, and from one end of heaven unto the other,—when, after having observed, successively, barbarism hence giving place to civilization, confusion to order, despotism to liberty, and wretchedness and misery succeeded by prosperity and happiness,—
when,

when, after dwelling with rapture on this enchanting scene, our attention is directed to one particular but extensive part of the globe, to the vast regions of Africa, what an accursed species of commerce do we see there encouraged! a *traffic in MEN*!! what different emotions do we feel! Our whole frame receives a sudden shock, and, instead of being elevated with admiration, or soothed with tranquil joy, we are lost in pensive melancholy, and are agitated with horror! The mind, recovering a little the power of recollection which it had thus well nigh lost, will naturally fall into the following train of

REFLECTIONS.

My God! what wish can prosper, or what pray'r,
For merchants rich in cargoes of despair,
Who drive a loathsome traffic, gage and span,
And buy the muscles and the bones of man?
The tender ties of father, husband, friend,
All bonds of nature in that moment end;
And each endures, while yet he draws his breath,
A stroke as fatal as the scythe of death.
The sable warrior, frantic with regret
Of her he loves and never can forget,
Loses in tears the far receding shore,
But not the thought that they must meet no more.
He to deep sadness sullenly resign'd,
Now feels his body's bondage in his mind,
Puts off his gen'rous nature, and, to suit
His manners with his fate, puts on the brute.
Nature imprints upon whate'er we see,
That has a heart and life in it, *be free*.
The *beasts* are charter'd—neither age nor force
Can quell the love of freedom in the horse.
Canst thou then, honour'd with a Christian name,
Buy what is *woman-born*, and feel no shame?
Trade in the blood of innocence, and plead
Expedience as a warrant for the deed?

So may the wolf, whom famine has made bold
 To quit the forest, and invade the fold;
 So may the ruffian, who, with ghostly glide,
 Dagger in hand, steals close to your bed side;
 Not he, but his *emergence* forc'd the door,
 He found it *inconvenient* to be poor.
 Has God then giv'n its sweetness to the cane,
 Unless his laws be trampled on—in vain!
 Built a brave world, which cannot yet subsist,
 Unless his right to rule it be dismiss'd?
 Impudent blasphemy! so folly pleads,
 And, av'rice being judge, with ease succeeds.
 Know, souls have no discriminating hue,
 Alike important in their Maker's view.
 The wretch that works and weeps without relief,
 Has one who notices his silent grief,
 He from whose hands alone all power proceeds,
 Ranks its abuse among the foulest deeds,
 Considers *all* injustice with a frown,
 But marks the man who treads his fellow down.
 Not Mexico could purchase kings a claim
 To scourge him, weariness his only blame.
 Remember, Heav'n has an avenging rod;
To smite the poor is treason against God.

—————My ear is pain'd,
 My soul is sick with ev'ry day's report
 Of wrong and outrage with which earth is fill'd.
 There is no flesh in man's obdurate heart,
 It does not feel for man; the nat'ral bond
 Of brotherhood is sever'd as the flax
 That falls asunder at the touch of fire.
 He finds his fellow *guilty* of a skin
Not colour'd like his own; and, having pow'r
 To inforce the wrong, for such a *worthy* cause
 Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey:
 And worse than all, and most to be deplor'd
 As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,

Chains

Chains him, and tasks him, and exacts his sweat
With stripes, that mercy with a bleeding heart
Weeps when she sees inflicted on a *beast*.

Then what is man? and what man seeing this,
And having human feelings, does not blush
And hang his head, to think himself a man!

I would not have a slave to till my ground,
To carry me, to fan me while I sleep,
And tremble when I wake, for all the wealth
Which sinews bought and sold have ever earn'd.
No: dear as freedom is, and in my heart's
Just estimation priz'd above all price,
I had much rather be myself the slave
And wear the bonds, than fasten them on him.

We have no slaves at home.--Then why abroad?
And they themselves, once ferried o'er the waves
That part us, are emancipate and loos'd.
Slaves cannot breathe in *England*: if their lungs
Receive our air, that moment they are free;
They touch our country, and their shackles fall.
That's noble, and bespeaks a nation proud
And jealous of the blessing. Spread it then,
And let it circulate through ev'ry vein
Of all your empire; that where Britain's pow'r
Is felt, mankind may feel her *mercy* too.

After these noble sentiments and such glowing poetic fire, in favour of liberty, and in detestation of oppression, it may not be unpleasing to present the reader, without entering into any minute detail of all the miseries which, by European avarice, cruelty and wickedness, are entailed on the ill-fated and wretched Africans, with a simple and pathetic delineation of what may naturally be supposed to pass, at times, through the mind of the enslaved negro. However incapable he may be just in such a manner to speak the sentiments of his mind, yet, from his condition and circumstances, we may easily imagine that similar with the following he, as a more percipient being, must frequently feel.

To enter more fully into the spirit of this, let the reader realize the situation of the poor and helpless African. Jaded with excessive fatigue, and sinking under the weight of inhuman punishments, he comes to his miserable hut, throws himself on his mat, and seeks relief from his woes in the forgetfulness of sleep. Scarce does he slumber, but he starts, awakened with the dreadful apprehension, that already the iron hand of oppression is about to repeat the accustomed wanton cruelties. Thus overpowered with fatigue and fear, nature refuses her wonted balm. A crowd of thoughts rush into his indignant mind, and, after long pondering his condition, he breaks forth into the following

COMPLAINT.

FORC'D from home and all its pleasures,

Afric's coast! I left forlorn;

To increase a stranger's treasures

O'er the raging billows borne.

Men from *England* bought and sold me,

Paid my price in paltry gold;

But though theirs they have enroll'd me,

Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,

What are *England's* rights, I ask,

Me from my delights to sever,

Me to torture, me to task?

Fleecy locks and black complexion

Cannot forfeit Nature's claim;

Skins may differ, but affection

Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all-creating Nature

Make the plant for which we toil?

Sighs must fan it, tears must water,

Sweat of ours must dress the soil.

Think, ye masters, iron-hearted!
 olling at your jovial boards,
 Think, how many backs have smarted,
 For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us---
 Is there one who reigns on high?
 Has he bid you buy and sell us,
 Speaking from his throne the sky?
 Ask him, if your knotted scourges,
 Fetters, blood-extorting screws,
 Are the means which duty urges,
 Agents of his will to use?

Hark! he answers---Wild tornadoes,
 Strewing yonder shores with wrecks,
 Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
 Are the voice with which he speaks.
 He, foreseeing what vexation
 Afric's sons would undergo,
 Fix'd their tyrants' habitation
 Where his whirlwind answers---No!

By our blood in Afric wasted
 Ere our necks receiv'd the chain---
 By the mis'ries which we tasted
 Crossing in your barks the main---
 By our suff'rings since ye brought us
 To the man-degrading mart,
 All sustain'd with patience taught us
 Only by a broken heart---

Deem our nations brutes no longer,
 Till some reason you shall find
 Worthier of regard, and stronger,
 Than the colour of our kind.
 Slaves to gold, whose sordid dealings
 Tarnish all your boasted pow'rs;
 Prove that ye have human feelings,
 Ere ye proudly question ours.

The testimonies which have been produced, of the horror and wretchedness which, in Africa and the West Indies, are the immediate offspring of slavery, stand unimpeached. This evidence is so strong as to maintain its ground against all which the art of interest and avarice can suggest. No arguments then are necessary to prove to the impartial mind, which has attentively considered the nature, perfect consistency, and united strength of these testimonies, that the above pieces present us with such ideas, and impress us with such sentiments of the slave-trade and slavery, as that evidence will fully justify. It is earnestly requested that every one, into whose hands this paper may chance to come, would, therefore, only fully realize this wretched condition, place themselves in the same situation, and then say, whether they can refuse to contribute all in their power to the abolition of a system of trade which has introduced anguish and distress into the abodes of hilarity and contentment---which has made the prince the plunderer of his country---which has overturned all moral principle, and, through an extent of thousands of miles, has reduced to an Aceldama the regions of simplicity: A system of trade which, after occasioning all these evils, and encouraging every wicked passion of the human heart, carries, annually, afar from their native plains, thousands of wretched victims to pine away oppressed with hunger, fatigue, and misery, and die a hundred deaths in one.

What humane mind can refuse to exert its whole influence, however small---what benevolent mind would not willingly sacrifice many gratifications, for the extermination of so accursed a traffic? Yea, what mind would not *rejoice* to be able to embrace an opportunity of making such sacrifices, and thus to give full proof of its abhorrence of what it professes to detest? Rejoice then, ye benevolent and humane, for such an opportunity is now offered you. Slavery depends on the consumption of the produce of its labour for support. Refuse this produce, and slavery

must cease. Say not that individual influence is small. Every aggregate must be composed of a collection of individuals. Though individual influence be small, the influence of collected numbers is irresistible. It is only by such collected individual influence that any important end is attained, any great design is accomplished by man. The power of numbers supplies the want of sufficient force in the individual; and their being collected, so as to act with an unity of power, renders them as efficacious and certain as though the power of the whole were vested in one. Did the whole of this power reside in you, you acknowledge that you would readily exert it to attain so desirable an end as the destruction of slavery, the slave-trade, and all its concomitant horrors. Why then will you refuse to assist in forming that power *by numbers*, which you so much wish that you, as an individual, could exert? Let there not be so manifest a contradiction between your professed desires and your actual conduct. Weak indeed must those desires be, which exist only in words, which produce no influence on our conduct, which cannot excite us to any self-denial. Prove that your wishes are not empty words; let your conduct declare that these are the genuine desires of your heart, and be assured that in the end you shall reap, if you faint not. The number of those who have already refused the produce of slavery is large, it is increasing daily, and no bounds can be assigned to its future progress. Every individual who increases this number, increases the influence of the aggregate. Come, then, enlarge this number. Realize the period, when, through its increase, slavery shall cease, and all the horrors and miseries it produces, shall cease with it. Realize the delightful retrospect, the joyful sentiments, which the consideration that you have contributed to so important and glorious an end will afford. Such sublime pleasures will abundantly more than compensate the loss of the low gratifications of a mere animal, depraved appetite;

For 'tis a god-like privilege to save,
 And he that scorns it, is himself a slave. AN

AUTHENTIC ACCOUNT

CONVERSION AND EXPERIENCE

N E G R O.

SOME years ago an English gentleman, by a particular providence, had occasion to be in North America, where, among other adventures, the following circumstance occurred to him, which is related in his own words.

“Every day’s observation convinces me that the children of God are made so by his own especial grace and power, and that all means, whether more or less, are equally effectual with him, whenever he is pleased to employ them for conversion.

“In one of my excursions, while I was in the province of New York, I was walking by myself over a considerable plantation, amused with its husbandry, and comparing it with that of my own country, till I came within a little distance of a middle-aged Negro, who was tilling the ground. I felt a strong inclination, unusual with me, to converse with him. After asking him some little questions about his work, which he answered very sensibly, I wished him to tell me, whether his state of slavery was not disagreeable to him, and whether he would not gladly exchange it for his liberty? “Massah (said he, looking seriously upon me), I have wife and children; my Massah takes care of them, and I have no care to provide any thing; I have a good massah who teach me to read, and I read good book, that makes me happy.” I am

glad, replied I, to hear you say so; and pray what is the good book you read? "The Bible, massah, God's own good book." Do you understand, friend, as well as read this book? for many can read the words well, who cannot get hold of the true and good sense. "O massah! says he, I read the book much before I understand; but at last I felt pain in my heart; I found things in the book that cut me to pieces." Aye, said I, and what things were they? "Why, massah, I found that I had bad heart, massah, a very bad heart indeed: I felt pain, that God would destroy me, because I was wicked, and done nothing as I should do. God was holy, and I was very vile and naughty; so I could have nothing from him but fire and brimstone in hell." In short, he entered into a full account of his convictions of sin, which were indeed as deep and piercing as any I had ever heard of; and what scriptures came to his mind, which he had read, that both probed him to the bottom of his sinful heart, and were made the means of light and comfort to his soul. I then inquired of him, what ministry or means he made use of? and found that his master was a Quaker, a plain sort of man, who had taught his slaves to read, but who had not, however, ever conversed with this Negro upon the state of his soul. I asked him likewise, how he got comfort under all this trial? "O massah! says he, it was Christ gave me comfort by his dear word. He bade me come unto him, and he would give me rest, for I was very weary and heavy laden." And here he went through a line of the most precious texts in the Bible, shewing me, by his artless comment upon them as he went along, what great things God had done in the course of some years for his soul. Being rather more acquainted with doctrinal truths, and the analogy of the Bible, than he had been; or in his situation could easily be; I had a mind to try how far a simple, untutored experience, graciously given without the usual means, could carry a man from some speculative errors; and I therefore asked him several questions about the merit of

works,

works, the justification of a sinner, the power of grace, and the like. I own I was as much astonished at, as I admired, the sweet spirit and simplicity of his answers, with the heavenly wisdom that God had put into the mind of this Negro. His discourse, flowing merely from the richness of grace, with a tenderness and expression far "beyond the reach of art," perfectly charmed me. On the other hand, my entering into all his feelings, together with an account to him, which he had never heard before, that thus and thus the Lord in his mercy dealt with all his children, and had dealt with me, drew streams of joyful tears down his black face, that we looked upon each other, and talked with that inexpressible glow of Christian affection, that made me more than ever believe, what I have often too thoughtlessly professed to believe, *the communion of saints*. I shall never forget, how the poor excellent creature seemed to hang upon my lips, and to eat my very words, when I enlarged upon the love of Christ to poor sinners, the free bounty and tender mercy of God, the frequent and delightful sense he gives of his presence, the faith he bestows in his promises, the victories this faith is enabled to get over trials and temptations, the joy and peace in believing, the hope in life and death, and the glorious expectation of immortality. To have taken off his eager, delighted, animated air and manner, would have been a master-piece for a Reynolds. He had never heard such discourse, nor found the opportunity of hearing it before. He seemed like a man who had been thrown into a new world, and at length had found company. Though my conversation lasted at least two or three hours, I scarce ever enjoyed the happy swiftness of time so sweetly in all my life. We knew not how to part. He would accompany me as far as he might; and I felt, for my part, such a delight in the artless, favoury, solid, unaffected experience of this dear soul, that I could have been glad to see him often then, or to see his like at any time now. But my situation rendered this impossible. I therefore took an affectionate

ate adieu, with an ardor equal to the warmest and the most ancient friendship, telling him, that neither the colour of his body, nor the condition of his present life, could prevent him from being my dear brother in our dear Saviour; and that, though we must part now, never to see each other again any more in this world, I had no doubt of our having another joyful meeting in our Father's home, where we should live together, and love one another throughout a long and a happy eternity. "Amen, Amen, my dear massah; God bless you, and poor me too, for ever and ever." If I had been an angel from heaven, he could not have received me with more evident delight than he did; nor could I have considered him with a more sympathetic regard, if he had been a long-known Christian of the good old sort, grown up into my affections in the course of many years."

A QUAKER's ADDRESS.

THE following short Address of a Quaker in Pennsylvania to his brethren, Abbe Raynal, in his history of the British Settlements in North America, tells us, produced such conviction as led them immediately to emancipate all the slaves in that state.

HOW long then shall we have two consciences, two measures, two scales; one in our own favour, one for the ruin of our neighbour, both equally false? Is it for us, Brethren, to complain at this moment, that the Parliament of Britain wishes to enslave us, and to impose upon us the yoke of subjects, without leaving us the rights of citizens; while, for this century past, we have been calmly acting the part of tyrants, by keeping in bonds of the hardest slavery

men who are our equals and our brethren? What have those unhappy creatures done to us, whom nature hath separated from us by barriers so formidable, whom our avarice has sought after thro' storms and wrecks, and brought away from the midst of their burning sands, or from their dark forests inhabited by tygers? What crime have they been guilty of, that they should be torn from a country which fed them without toil, and that they should be transplanted by us to a land where they perish under the labours of servitude? Father of heaven, what family hast Thou then created, in which the elder born, after having seized on the property of their brethren, are still resolved to compel them, with stripes, to manure, with the blood of their veins and the sweat of their brow, that very inheritance of which they have been robbed! Deplorable race!—whom we render brutes, to tyrannize over them; in whom we extinguish every power of the soul, to load their limbs and their bodies with burdens; in whom we efface the image of God, and the stamp of manhood: a race mutilated and dishonoured as to the faculties of mind and body, throughout its existence, by us who are Christians and Britons! Britons, ye people favoured by Heaven, and respected on the seas, would ye be free and tyrants at the same instant? No, Brethren: it is time we should be consistent with ourselves. Let us set free those miserable victims of our pride: Let us restore the negroes to liberty, which man should never take from man. May all Christian societies be induced by our example to repair an injustice authorized by the crimes and plunders of two centuries! May men too long degraded, at length raise to Heaven their arms freed from chains, and their eyes bathed with tears of gratitude! Alas! the unhappy mortals have hitherto shed no tears, but those of despair!

TO THE CLERGY.

PERMIT a Brother to address you on the subject of the Slave Trade; by which, not only the rights of humanity, but the doctrines and duties of Christianity, have been proved to be so grossly violated.

I presume not to prove to you, what you so well know; that *this horrid traffic in man is contrary to the law of Moses, which forbids robbery and murder—and to the law of Christ, which is ever commanding and inculcating good will and good offices to all our fellow creatures*: I only intreat you, to shew to those committed to your charge, your abhorrence of a practice so contrary to every command of our Lord and Master, by enforcing the necessity of abolishing this *trade in human misery*. When the rights of nature and the laws of God are thus trampled upon, surely it is the peculiar duty of the Clergy to *cry aloud* against such impiety; and not only to declare their own detestation of so impious a trade, but to induce the people, by every legal and just method, to abolish this most unnatural merchandize in our fellow creatures, who are approved, “by a crowd of witnesses,” to have been stolen, bought and sold, abused and beaten, suffocated, famished, or worked to death.

It is almost impossible, one would think, that a country *so zealous for liberty, so famous for justice and humanity, should for a moment protect and encourage a trade, from which such consequences are inseparable*—not only against every refined principle of that “*greater light* which God hath given to rule the day” of Christianity, but against every idea of that common justice, which “*ruled the night*” of heathenism.

Let us then express and impress, as we ought, a just sense of the injury done by the Slave Trade to human nature, and of the indignity offered to our most merciful religion and its most humane author. Let us lament,

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in strongest terms, the reproach and danger to our country, by the continuance of this most unchristian traffic. Let us, in the most earnest manner, intreat those who are concerned, *as they fear their God and love their country*, to abolish utterly this most horrid commerce, *so notoriously inhuman, unjust and impious*, and which the evidence gives us great reason to believe is *unnecessary, unprofitable, and (which weighs with many more than justice) impolitic*.

J. B.

Grosvenor Street.

To the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled.

The PETITION of the SHARKS of AFRICA,

Sheweth,

THAT your petitioners are a numerous body, and at present in a very flourishing situation, owing chiefly to the constant visitation of the shipping of your island.

That by hovering round these floating dungeons your petitioners are supplied with large quantities of their most favourite food—human flesh.

That your petitioners are sustained; not only by the carcases of those who have fallen by distempers, but are frequently gratified with rich repasts from the bodies of living negroes who voluntarily plunge into the abodes of your petitioners, preferring instant destruction by their jaws, to the imaginary horrors of a lingering slavery.

That among the enormous breakers and surfs which roll on the shores of your petitioners, numbers of English boats are destroyed, the crews of which usually fall to their lot, and afford them many

ny a delicious meal, but, above all, that large vessels, crowded with negroes, are sometimes dashed on the rocks and shoals which abound in the regions of your petitioners, whereby hundreds of human beings, both black and white, are at once precipitated into their element, where the gnawing of human flesh, and the crashing of bones, afford to your petitioners the highest gratification which their natures are capable of enjoying.

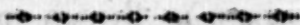
Thus benefited, as your petitioners are, by this widely extended traffic, a traffic which has never before been molested, it is with the utmost indignation they hear that there are in Britain men, who, under the specious plea of humanity, are endeavouring to accomplish its abolition.—But your petitioners trust that this attempt at innovation, this flourishing of the trumpet of liberty, by which “more is meant than meets the ear,” will be effectually frustrated.

Should the lower branch of the legislature be so far infatuated by this new-fangled humanity as seriously to meditate the destruction of this highly beneficial commerce, your petitioners have the firmest reliance on the wisdom and fellow-feeling of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal of Great Britain.

Your petitioners know, that the truly benevolent will ever be consistent—that they will not sacrifice one part of animated nature to the preservation of another, that they will not suffer sharks to starve in order that negroes may be happy;—yet your petitioners are apprehensive, that the baleful influence of this philanthropic mania is already felt even within the walls of your Lordships, wherefore they crave to be **HEARD BY COUNSEL** at the bar of your august assembly, when, notwithstanding the wild ravings of fanaticism, they hope to evince, that the sustenance of sharks, and the best interests of your Lordships, are intimately connected with the traffic in human flesh.

Fearful of becoming tedious, your petitioners have only to add, that should the abolition take place,
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which the god of sharks avert, the prosperity of your petitioners will inevitably be destroyed, and their numbers, by being deprived of their accustomed food, rapidly diminished.—But, on the other hand, should your Lordships, in your legislative capacity, scorn the feelings of the vulgar, and nobly interfere, either openly, or by procrastination, to preserve this invigorating trade from the ruin that now seems to await it, your petitioners and their wide-mouthed posterity, as by nature urged, will ever, ever PREY, &c.



PETITION TO PARLIAMENT,
 FOR THE ABOLITION OF THE SLAVE TRADE.

WE Inhabitants of ——— in the County of ——— in that part of Great Britain called ——— reflecting on the nature and consequences of the Trade to Africa in Slaves, so long carried on by British subjects, under the sanction of Government, beg leave once more to petition your Honourable House, to suppress the same without modification or delay. Convinced as we are, that this traffic is repugnant to the principles of natural equity, and the native feelings of an uncorrupted heart; and contrary also to the genius and obligations of the Christian religion, we cannot view its continuance, thro' the concurrence of our Legislature, no not for ever so short a period, with indifference. Your own sentiments and decision on a former occasion respecting it, fully authorise us in calling it *inhuman, cruel, and unjust*, a character which must at all times equally belong to it; and we know of no dispensing power, authorising human governments to sanction and protect inhumanity, cruelty and injustice, from any political considerations whatever. The Supreme Power can never tolerate those who reign and decree justice by him, to violate his precepts, and trample on his sacred authority.

The rule of Righteousness, respecting the duties nations and individuals owe one another, is immutable like its Divine Author, and equally binding on all descriptions of men. From the benefits accruing from the due observance of this rule, the poor cannot be excluded, nor have the rich any exclusive right to neglect it: for the same God that hath made of one blood all nations on the face of the earth, hath also bound them by one and the same law, whether impressed upon the heart, or, in addition to this, externally revealed. *Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we then deal treacherously against our Brethren?*

Since God expressly declares that he will execute judgment and justice for all those that are oppressed, and break in pieces their oppressors; that for the oppression of the poor, and for the sighing of the needy, he will arise to set them in safety from the men that puff at them, we are justified by the Divine authority in asserting, that for all the evils committed by British subjects in this traffic, God will bring us into judgment, and avenge the wrongs which we have done his intelligent creatures. That he will do this speedily, if not already in part executed, by the war in which we are unhappily involved, and its ruinous consequences, we see no small reason to conclude, from the late remonstrances extorted from Conscience, his deputy in the human breast, against this infernal commerce. The continuance of it, by the special authority of your august House, notwithstanding such remonstrances, in our deliberate judgment, not only aggravates in a high measure the guilt since contracted by it, but also affords a dreadful sign of God's determined purpose to punish it on these lands; which we have farther reason to dread from the loss of the Bill to prevent our supplying foreign markets with slaves. Hence, we can count no piece of reformation in the State adequate and satisfactory, while this root of bitterness and mischief is fenced by the bulwark of national power, and watered from

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the fountain of legislative authority†.—A concern, therefore, for the stability of the Throne, and the prosperity of Britain and its dependencies, as well as for the happiness of unknown myriads of our fellow men, actuates us in making this application, and demands our perseverance, if necessary, till the great object of it is obtained, that we may at least deliver our own souls, if not so happy as to succeed in pleading the common cause of humanity; and a similar concern should doubtless induce every member of your honourable House, to concur in granting the prayer of this our PETITION.

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THE

† The author may be thought to express his apprehensions too strongly above. Feeling his mind, by frequent reflection on the subject, deeply impressed with it, he may have expressed his sentiments and forebodings in such a manner as some may tax with enthusiasm—Be it so—Though he should farther incur this charge, he feels himself constrained to repeat, that the criminal hand Britain hath so long had in the odious traffic of our fellow men, shall not pass with impunity. To fix the time and manner of avenging their wrongs pertains to God, but if he is a God of truth and justice, it must infallibly take place, and a variety of circumstances concur in pointing out the period as at no great distance; when *with what measure we mete, it shall be measured to us again*, whence we shall have reason to conclude that *verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth*. The express threats of his word against all oppressors, and promises to plead the cause of the oppressed, and execute judgment for them, ascertain this, unless we presume to say that these are but words of course, and that there is no veracity in the speaker. Are not the People in question oppressed? Let Britain hear such threats and tremble; for that God with whom we have to do, is not slack concerning his threatenings, as some men count: for he will distribute sorrows in his anger. To fill up the measure of our iniquity, and secure the execution of the Divine threatenings denounced against such practices, we have by our Representatives consented to the continuance of a traffic which involves the violation of every principle and precept of natural and revealed religion, not only for the supply of our own Colonies with slaves; but also that we should employ our shipping and our seamen in it, for the supply of foreign markets. One was induced to believe that the opinion formerly declared concerning it as *inhuman, cruel, and unjust*, and that it ought to be abolished, was the language of conscience: but such conduct gives reason to call this in question, and to view it merely as intended to lull the public mind respecting it; in which view it has had its effect. Solomon saith of a certain class of men, *they dissemble with their lips, and lay up deceit within them, When they speak fair, believe them not: for there are seven abominations in their heart*.

THE exercise of Asaph, in the 77th Psalm, so much resembling that of the Prophet here, tho' proceeding from a different cause, some part of it is introduced at the beginning and towards the close of the following poem. The invasion of the land of Judea by the Caldean army, and the direful calamities, and tedious captivity which thence followed, are the great objects that excite the Prophet's distress on this mournful occasion; and lead him to pour out his heart to God in prayer, and to suggest ground of hope and consolation to his Countrymen, and himself, in the prospect of these desolations. With this view, he directs the attention of the Church to the signal displays of God's power in their behalf in Egypt, at the red sea, in the wilderness, and afterwards in the land of Canaan; all which he celebrates in a manner becoming the dignity and importance of these divine works, and the infinite majesty of their Author. The Prophet, in his selection of events, does not adhere strictly to the order in which they took place in respect of time; and in several instances he leaves us at a loss to know, whether he alludes to those that happened in Egypt, or thereafter in the conquest of Canaan, this being no way material to his main purpose. Several circumstances are borrowed in the Descant from the history of these events elsewhere recorded, which are either passed over, or but slightly touched at in the text.

The hostile measures which at present involve the states of Europe in waste of blood and treasure, and our own among the rest, induced the author to give It a place in this publication, as too descriptive of effects which have already resulted, and may still farther result from them, tho' it was wrote before hostilities commenced, and of course without any eye to them. To a well disposed mind, that views Providential events in a proper light, the reflections which occur in it will, it is hoped, be neither out of season, nor unacceptable; especially as being founded on the word of God, and so having the sanction of his authority.

DESCANT on Ch. III. of HABAKKUK.

SOON as, my God, thy voice assail'd mine ear,
 My frame confess'd its pow'r, convuls'd with fear.
 Who can abide the terrors of thy look?
 Or once sustain the shock of thy rebuke?

To Thee I cry, oh, to our help repair, 5
 As oft before, in answer to our pray'r!
 In all our straits, Thou art our present aid,
 Who thy own care hast our salvation made;
 And that when troubles did so much abound,
 That help or comfort could no where be found. 10
 Now days of grief and deep distress invade,
 And we're nigh brought to death's dark dismal shade.

On Thee I thought, and seasons long since o'er,
 Yet still my plaints continue as before.
 At gloom's return I view my former songs, 15
 But sorrow still its triumph sad prolongs.
 Will God in wrath renounce his chosen race?
 Can He forget his former acts of grace?
 Ah! shall his love no more deliverance bring?
 And hath his mercy seal'd her ev'ry spring? 20
 Shall his fierce wrath 'gainst us for ever burn,
 While we are left in bondage sad to mourn?

No:—what but weakness can suggest these fears?
 His pow'r and grace fail not with lapse of years.
 Hence I'll to mind his mighty acts recall, 25
 And at his throne of mercy prostrate fall;
 In hope He will his gracious ear incline,
 And cause his face on Zion yet to shine.

Amid due wrath, remember us in love,
 Thy mercy charge to spare us from above. 30
 If we must suffer for our countless crimes,
 Far hence exil'd to barbarous heathen climes,
 Amidst such scenes—such desolating years,
 Thy work revive, and wipe off all our tears!

From Paran's height, in bright consuming flame,
 Lo, Isra'l's Holy One majestic came! 35
 The God of nature in his gait appears,
 As robes of state He light refulgent wears;
 While He announc'd, with solemn pomp his law,
 To Jacob's tribes, whom the dread scene did awe.
 A burst of glory vests the arch above, 40
 And fills the earth, where He in state did move;
 Commanding praise from myriads of our race,
 While wonders great are done before his face.
 And, if so pow'rful a few passing rays, 45
 What, Lord, thy glory's full celestial blaze!

The mountains shook as He terrific trod,
 And bow'd in homage to the present God.
 Nature's vast pillars on their base all reel,
 When He descended for his people's weal. 50
 His glory quite o'erpow'rs the noon-tide blaze,
 And from his palm pour forth celestial rays.
 Yet these, tho' bright, did but his might conceal,
 To mortal eyes what can his pow'r reveal?

In Egypt-land, that felt his wrath as fire, 55
 And in Canaan, which had incur'd his ire,
 Fierce burning blains did for a season rage,
 And in the conflict nature's pow'rs engage.
 Before his face the ghastly pest forth stalks,
 And scatters death in her wide wasted walks; 60
 While war and famine tread, ah! close behind,
 These fell destroyers of the human kind.
 The clouds furcharg'd, emit their store in storms,—
 The stars wage war, while hail his word performs.
 Loud peals of thunder speak his pow'rful ire, 65
 Beneath his feet expand fierce flames of fire.
 His breath these kindles,—at his dread command,
 Woes-issue thence to waste a guilty land.

He paus'd,—and scann'd with one extensive view,
 The globe of earth, ere forth his vengeance flew. 70
 He Canaan measur'd for his chosen race,
 That pleasant land, assign'd them of his grace.
 At his dread look the nations disappear,
 That lately struck his ransom'd tribes with fear.

He spoke in wrath, the mountains bend and leap, 75
 On their firm base none durst his station keep.
 Hills torn, and rocks emit one hideous roar,
 While bursts the ground that solid was before.
 All nature felt his voice from pole to pole,
 And terrors seize on ev'ry human soul. 80
 Great kings and states, who oft did might display,
 At his approach are fill'd with dread dismay;
 Those slain, these ruin'd, never more to rise,
 Who can contend with Him that rules the skies?
 Unlike the deeds of mortal man, his flow 85
 From pow'r divine, nor bound nor limit know.

Lo! Cuthan's tents are forthwith all dismay'd,
 I saw their conflicts 'mid the troubled shade;
 And Midian too, could not the shock withstand,
 When fame such feats had wasted to his land. 90
 Of Jacob's God the name sounds far and near,
 And nations tremble where his signs appear.

The swelling depths recoil at his dread nod;
 And form a path for their Almighty God.
 A trembling horror wide arrests the main, 95
 And rivers deep are bound as with a chain.
 Whence sprung such wrath? did you Him, floods, dis-
 Was his ire rous'd against the raging seas? (please?
 That he march'd so across the spacious main,
 For Isra'l's weal, with terrors in his train? 100
 That He smote rivers, and repress'd the deep,
 The fountains seal'd, and made hard rocks to weep?

At thy strong blast the floods collected were,
 And rear'd their tow'ring sides congeal'd in air;
 To massive walls on either hand were cast, 105
 Till thy redeem'd had all in safety past.
 Thy barbed shafts flew forth with winged speed,
 Thy hanghty foes these lodge among the dead.

Why did the rivers to their source retire?
 Was it because they felt thy burning ire? 110
 Why roar'd old ocean from his deepest caves?
 What pow'r could chain his furious threat'ning waves?
 Cause these reflow—a dreadful rolling tide?
 Their fury quell, to their wont bed subside,

Ejecting

Ejecting myriads slain upon the shore, 113
While rescu'd Israel all devout adore?

What arm could shake the mountains on their base?
Or rocks and hills from their old site erase?

These works are thine, Almighty Lord of hosts,
Whence let thy praise resound o'er nature's coasts:
For idol-gods can not with Thee once vie, 120
Who art the Maker both of earth and sky.

The flinty rock, obedient to thy word,
Did to thy people copious draughts afford;
Such floods pour'd forth as cleft the solid ground,
And thro' the wild, like rivers did abound. 125

The Rock of ages, smit by justice' rod,
To Zion's sons will glad'ning streams afford,
Which shall attend them to the close of time,
And prove their boundless bliss in glory's clime. 130

These acts were thine, when 'Thou thy tribes didst lead,
From Mizraim's land, as their conducting Head.

Thy pow'r, O God, could equal these and more,
Whence taught, may we still trust Thee and adore!

The sun and moon stood still in their abode, 135
Obedient to the mandate of their God,

To lighten Isra'l to pursue the foe,
While his own arm did deal the fatal blow.

When He made bare his ever-matchless arm,
His foes could not sustain the dread alarm; 140

They quickly sunk to shades of endless night,
Can feeble mortals with their Maker fight?

His missive shafts, and awful burnish'd spear,
Like lightning fly athwart the troubled air.

All nature arms, if nature's God once call, 145
To plead his cause his works are ready all.

Did Isra'l fear th' Eternal Lord of host,
Still might they make his pow'rful arm their boast.

Did they by faith invoke his name in pray'r,
And make his service their incessant care; 150

He still would aid them, as He oft before,
And cause them triumph, while their foes deplore.

With contrite hearts, ye favour'd, select race,
 His guardian care, and mighty works retrace;
 While you implore, confide still in his grace: 155 }
 For He will crown a pious people's pray'r,
 The unreclaim'd alone his vengeance share.
 Shall not our God, who sav'd his Church before,
 From Chaldean thrall his chosen tribes restore?

Thro' Palestine our conq'ring God went forth, 160
 Assembled nations felt that he was wroth.

The groans of wounded, and the blood of slain,
 Fill'd, awful! fill'd each fatal hostile plain.
 For Isra'l's safety did He march abroad,
 With *thine* ANOINTED† went Almighty God. 165

Salvation, Lord, did then thine arms engage,
 Against our foes Thyself the war didst wage.
 Thine ire consum'd the wicked branch and root,
 Who reap'd of guilt the direful bitter fruit.

Their walled cities, and their strongest tow'rs, 170
 Thy roused vengeance suddenly o'erpow'rs;

While swift as whirlwind they would us o'ertake,
 In hope, exulting, captives us to make.

To plead our cause, Jehovah took the field, 175

Who is our King, our glorious sun and shield;
 While nature's pow'rs to their great Author yield. }

How firm thy awful motion thro' the deep,
 Where many a hero sunk in lasting sleep!

Thy hostile car each where triumphant rode, 180

And thund'ring spoke the matchless pow'r of God!

Thus our great King fulfill'd his word and oath,

To Abram pledg'd, and to his children both.

To Him what all the princes of the earth,

Who can at will remand their vital breath?

Ah! now Thou art become our mighty Foe, 185

Whence hostile troops invade, and menace woe.

I see, I see the war-like bands draw near,

Proud Babel's sons in dread array appear:

For

† Ver. 13. viz. Joshua, whose name imports a Saviour or deliverer; for he was an eminent type of him whose name is the Anointed or Christ.

For so just Heav'n for all our crimes ordains, 190
 Commands his scourge to smite and waste our plains.
 These, fierce as lions, seize, and wound and slay,
 And swift as eagles, dart upon the prey.

What dire portents my pained heart affright!
 What scenes of horror rise before my sight!
 The victors shouts assail—astound mine ears, 195
 My Native land, thy woes command my tears.
 I see thy troops before their en'mies flee,
 Garbs roll'd in blood, and cities sack'd I see †.
 So God hath said, whose word is firm and sure;
 My People's ruin, how can I endure! 200

Ah! quite o'erpow'rd, I faint beneath the load,
 Who can support the terrors of a God?
 My blood, thence freez'd, now stagnates in my veins,
 And my whole frame's convuls'd with grief and pains.
 With consternation I am quite struck dumb, 205
 All pale I quake, as ready for the tomb.
 I prostrate lie beneath thy mighty hand,
 Because I, too, have stain'd thy favour'd land.
 Hence shall I rest when war's alarms assail,
 And o'er the guilty in dread sort prevail; 210
 When God incens'd, shall the whole land invest,
 And with his troops his daring foes arrest.
 I'll kiss the rod,—the smiting hand adore,
 Tho' I still feel, and the sad case deplore.
 Thou art our Sire, do what seems to Thee best, 215
 But in thy favour let our souls have rest.

'Tho' the rich olive should deny its oil,
 Nor more reward the peasant's care and toil;
 Tho' bloom or fruit should not adorn the vine,
 Or foës us rob of the extracted wine; 220
 Tho' figs should cease to grace their parent bough,
 And fields and plains their wonted stores forego;
 Tho' in the stall the steer and steed expire,
 And folds be smit with pest, or Heav'n's dread fire:

Yet

† Every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood. Isa. 9. 5.

Yet to my God my ev'ry pow'r resign'd, 225
In Him sweet rest my troubled heart shall find.

His grace and mercy shall my lips proclaim,
And my whole soul exult still in his name.
When guilt is punish'd by an angry God,
And nations smart beneath his vengeful rod; 230

When heroes shrink, and tremble with dismay,
Feel to their coast there is a judgment day;
In thee, my God, shall I find sweet repose,
My soul at ease, unaw'd by num'rous foes. 235

Thy guardian wings shall my whole frame o'erspread,
While thousands round sink to death's gloomy shade.
Thy servant shield from noisome plague and strife,
Guide safe thro' the afflictive vale of life.

To me Thou art salvation, strength and song, }
To whom my heart, and ev'ry pow'r belong, 240 }
Source of my joy, Thy praise dwell on my tongue. }

Swift as the hind, our foes we'll yet pursue,
When gracious Heav'n shall our blest state renew;
Swift as the roe, to run our heav'nly race, 245
And to triumph, He'll make his sons thro' grace.

Ye fav'rite ones, who claim Him as your Sire,
Be not dismay'd, hence, at his wasting ire.
Tho' vengeance rous'd, should mount her bloody car,
Drive o'er the fields, and kindle ruthless war;
Tho' blood and slaughter fill the hostile plain, 250
Thrice dreadful sight! it strew with warriors slain;
And woes of divers dreadful forms abound,
While horror spreads her baleful wings around:

In his pavilion shall He safe you hide,
Amidst such scenes, whatever may betide. 255

Lo! Jacob's God o'er earth's each limit reigns,
Lets loose the wicked, or at pleasure chains.
These scenes subserve shall his own great design,
In which still see, and own his hand Divine.
He shall in these deep stain weak human pride, 260
The boasted might of his proud foes deride.

Impell'd by guilt, the strokes that justice deals,
Are meant for good, by these such souls He heals,

As

As thy to mercy, that exalts the low, 265
 Shields the oppress'd, and feels for human woe;—
 Kind heals our wounds, allays each grievous smart,
 If to his throne we bring a contrite heart.
 Loath to avenge, where crimes his wrath demand,
 He's swift to hear, and prone to spare a land;
 To shed o'er all the precious balm of peace, 270
 Soon as to tread in folly's path we cease.
 Know, healing balm in Gilead doth abound,
 That there a great Physician may be found.

What god with Isra'l's God may once compare,
 Who their redemption made his special care? 275
 What mighty wonders did his hand achieve,
 Among the nations? still in Him believe.
 On seeing Him, the quaking flood recoils,
 His angry look the spacious deep embroils.
 The pregnant clouds pour forth their wat'ry store,
 And heav'n resounds with one terrific roar, 280
 He spoke, and swift his deadly arrows fly,
 And peals of thunder roll along the sky.
 All nature seems but one continu'd blaze,
 While earth throughout reels on its stable base. 285
 Beyond our ken, in depths thy ways Thou hast
 In these our days, as in the seasons past:
 Yet as their Shepherd dost Thou Isra'l keep,
 Nor wilt abandon thine own pasture-sheep.
 Hence in our God we'll all our trust repose, 290
 Who soon can bless, and crush with ease our foes.

Thou King of kings, whose realm extends o'er all,
 Before whose throne both high and low must fall;
 O'er all the earth cause war's alarms to cease,
 And still maintain the precious boon of peace. 295
 May kings and rulers in thy fear still reign,
 Their people free from ev'ry servile chain,
 And ne'er be found to treat them as their foes,
 'Thro pride,—ambition, swell their list of woes!
 May both as one, to the same centre move, 300
 While kings give Freedom and their subjects love!
 That human woes may ev'ry where decrease,
 And nations share the bliss of lasting peace.

Ah!

Ah! when will rulers *nursing fathers* prove,
 Their conduct sanction'd by the Pow'r above? 305
 Like yonder sun, rich blessings widely shed?
 Whence pray we may, Long live each crowned Head!
 How long shall man invade the rights of man,
 Oppose the God of nature's bounteous plan?
 How long shall lucre's thralls free men inslave? 310
 From this disgrace, Good Heav'n, the nations save!
 Nor visit Britain, in thy dreadful ire,
 For this our guilt, like a consuming fire!

Ye favour'd Britons, lay your state to heart,
 Ere made to feel the too deserved smart. 315
 In sin abounding, view the signs of woe,
 Who can recount the ills that from it flow?
 While sparing mercy some respite may lend,
 Without delay your perverse ways amend;
 Ere God you smite, like Israel of yore, 320
 And when too late your folly you deplore:
 For He now calls, in time incline your ear,
 The God you slight, shall soon your Judge appear.
 Your ways review, thence learn what we deserve,
 From which may Heav'n our Island long preserve!

May Truth Divine the nations all illume, 325 }
 And earth's each state, Messiah's soon become, }
 While as his vineyard all with verdure bloom;
 That these, submitting, to his regal sway,
 May all be bless'd with one propitious day! 330
 May ev'ry change to this grand centre tend,
 And safely in this REVOLUTION END;
 That Earth's each bound may hail His blest domain,
 And race to race be happy in HIS REIGN;
 That wars invade the human race no more,
 T' enrich a few, while millions sad deplore!

VERSES from an ODE for the Meeting of the Friends
of the Press, 15th of June 1793*.

THE chains of Rome Britannia broke,
Impatient of a foreign yoke;
Her sons to freedom ever dear,
Were foremost in the proud career:
And long her Princes strove in vain
To rivet a domestic chain:
No end of the fierce contest Europe saw,
Till liberty was fix'd on the firm base of law.

O

* The following quotation on the liberty of the Press from a foreign author †, who wrote an excellent essay upon the British constitution, merits our attention.

"In short, whoever considers what it is that constitutes the moving principle of what we call great affairs, and the invincible sensibility of man to the opinion of his fellow creatures, will not hesitate to affirm, that if it were possible for the liberty of the press to exist in a despotic government, and (what is not less difficult), for it to exist without changing the constitution or government, this liberty of the press would alone form a counterpoise to the power of the Prince. If, for example, in an empire of the East, a sanctuary could be found, which, rendered respectable by the ancient religion of the people, might insure safety to those who should bring thither their observations of any kind; and that, from thence, printed papers should issue, which, under a certain seal, might be equally respected; and which, in their daily appearance, should examine and freely discuss the conduct of the Cadis, the Bashaws, the Vizier, the Divan, and the Sultan himself; that would introduce immediately some degree of liberty."

If the justice of these remarks be allowed, Britons may see how dear the liberty of the press should be to them, unless dead to the love of two of the most valuable rights of man as a member of society, civil and religious liberty, which must fall or stand together with it. The measures of men in public trust, are like a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid; and while millions are interested in their consequences, and even every individual in particular, they have not the least shadow of claim to be exempted from public discussion. What equally concerns all, none should be forbidden to investigate, or make the topic of conversation or writing, tho' he may

† *Monsieur de Lolme.*

O say then in this trying hour
 Of rights oppos'd to Tyrant Pow'r;
 Say, shall a dastard British race,
 The slaves of pension and of place,
 Stoop to resume their ancient yoke,
 And forge these chains their fathers broke?
 Shall men—shall Britons—for the husks of swine,
 Barter their native rights, and heritage divine!

While others struggle to be free,
 Unmov'd shall we the contest see?
 Shall we our native rights forego,
 And own a Friend in Freedom's Foe?
 O prize those rights so dearly won,
 The sacred gift of fire to son!
 And, as you prize those rights, think, ere too late,
 Of Despots' faith, and Poland's hapless fate!

No common ill alarms our zeal,
 Excites our cares for Britain's weal;
 To the best safeguard of our land,
 Have we not seen destruction plann'd;
 The Press, our Freedom's dearest part,
 Assail'd in turns by force and art:
 While Judges terrors of the laws decree,
 And Clubs combine to overawe the free.

K 2

While

may err, and happen to draw wrong conclusions: for deprive men of this privilege, either in religion or politics, or indeed in any branch of science, and you lay the ax to the root of the dearest blessings in life, and preclude every improvement. The very prohibition must excite alarm in a people jealous of their liberty, and beget the most uneasy and unfavourable suspicions. But why surmise a doubt on this head, when the late Royal proclamation, enjoining us to pray for success to his Majesty's arms in the present war, as a just and necessary one, recognises in effect our right as subjects to satisfy ourselves respecting its justice and necessity; for it could not mean to require our implicit faith in an authority merely human, and indeed if it did, this would be commanding us to offend against God, who expressly enjoins us to be able to give a reason of the hope that is in us. God deals with us as men, endued with reason, and as such would have us worship him; and they that would urge us to address him in any other manner, would urge us to insult him.

While Freedom's foes around combine,
 Say, shall her friends remain supine?
 A triumph gain'd to Freedom's cause
 Demands this day our thanks—applause—
 To one whose worth all price outweighs;
 Whom but to name is highest praise:
 Fox, form'd by Heav'n on that exalted plan,
 That Nature may stand up and say,—This is a Man.

“ That Juries shall in all decide;
 “ Their voice the law, and facts their guide:”
 That sacred principle now stands
 To guard the Press from impious hands:
 The Press—Palladium of our Isle!
 On which depends the holy pile
 Of Laws and Rights, which many an age has stood,
 Rear'd by our fathers' hands, cemented by their blood.

O! venerate the sacred trust,
 And to yourselves—your children just—
 'Gainst private int'rest, party rage,
 The noble war of Freedom wage:
 Tho' dangers menace your career,
 In Freedom's cause—can Briton's fear?
 Your children claim the rights your fathers gave:
 Rights bought with life—'tis yours to die or save!

APPLICATION TO PARLIAMENT,

*For the Reform of such abuses as have crept into the
 State, justified.*

THE subject of reform hath of late excited much
 attention, and acquired many friends and enemies.
 The number of those who directly deny that there
 exist abuses in the State, the reform of which might
 be

be of essential service, is but small; yet a variety of expedients are industriously employed to counteract the accomplishment of so desirable an object, and throw an odium on the cause of reform, and those who embark in it. Some who would be thought to wish well to that cause, pretend that this is not the proper time to stir in it, and therefore tax such as profess themselves friendly to it, or take an active part in it, as disaffected to those who hold the reins of government, and having some hostile intentions against the Constitution and administration of their Country. Thus have all that ever attempted to promote reformation in either Church or State, been stigmatized by the ignorant, the designing and self-interested. If reform be good in itself, and really needful, then it is good and commendable to be zealously affected in promoting it; for faint wishes and feeble efforts never produce any salutary effects.

In order to crush this cause, it is well known what combinations have been formed by persons of wealth and influence, and their dependants, with express view to harrass such, whether in the mechanical or commercial line, as give it their support, or appear to wish it well. To deter such, they are threatened with the loss of their customers; nor does it rest in mere threats; for these have been put in execution, and have no doubt in many cases had their designed effect. Such a species of persecution is no less impolitic in itself, and dishonourable to its authors, than persecution for conscience sake in matters merely religious. It betrays and injures the very cause to support which it is employed, and tho' it may procure it partial support for a time, this will only render it eventually more odious and detestable. What convinces the judgment, needs no coercive measures to enforce it; and without furnishing ground of rational conviction, respecting the expedience and utility of any measure, the more reflecting and intelligent part of mankind cannot be supposed to accede.

The most formidable arguments which are employed against reform and the friends of it, consist chiefly of gross misrepresentations of which some are very lavish, or low satire and burlesque, as some late productions on that side of the question can fully attest; but a good cause, not needing, disdains to be indebted to such weapons for its defence; and indeed, the calling in such aid gives shrewd ground to suspect the goodness of the cause in support of which they are wielded: for, till better fail, men seldom have recourse to these.

There are who allege religious considerations for opposing every application for reform in the state. They tell us, that it is unbecoming in a Christian to concern himself with such matters, and acting contrary to the precepts and design of Christianity. This objection, if just, would at once lay the ax to the root, and for ever cut off every attempt in a Christian state to meliorate their political circumstances, be these ever so degrading and oppressive; if they would not forfeit all claim to that honourable character. The reason however, which is sometimes assigned for this recommended apathy in Christians respecting public matters, does no great honour to the statesmen and politicians of the world. It is of a piece with the reason which our Lord gave to a disciple, who sought leave to go and bury his father; that is, probably, to attend upon him in his old age till he should have an opportunity of performing this last office to him; *Let the dead bury their dead, but follow thou me*—let those who are unfit, from their prevailing dispositions and turn of mind, to attend to higher or more noble concerns, mind the earthly affairs of the state, and let all real Christians resign this to them, devoting themselves to the cares and pursuits of another and better world. The author begs leave to assign some of the reasons which induce him to be of a different mind from those alluded to above.

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The Constitution of Britain, and indeed of every free state, recognises the right of the subjects to petition their Legislature or Executive Power, for a redress of whatever they may deem a grievance; and, of course, recognises and also ascertains the obligation on rulers to attend to such petitions, and, if well founded, to grant the prayer of them. This is a fundamental article in all well-regulated governments, without which they would be downright despotism; and this privilege we see subjects daily exercise in other matters, without once incurring either odium or censure. Why then should the friends of reform be branded for availing themselves of a right, which they possess in common with their fellow subjects, in a matter that appears to them interesting to their Country, to themselves and posterity, especially as it is granted on all hands, that grievances and abuses of considerable magnitude do exist at present in the state, and have been on the increase? Hath not this been allowed even by the Majority in Parliament, when they did not once attempt to disprove the facts upon which the petitioners founded their complaints and application? and why then should those be stigmatized as enemies to their King and Country, who express, in a legal and peaceable manner, their earnest wish to have grounds of complaint removed, while this may be done without endangering the just and legal rights of any one class of men in the state? To particularise existing abuses, and descant upon them, is not my present purpose. The Public are already possessed of ample information on that head, and the Reader will find some in the selected pieces that are subjoined.

If it be granted that those who equally bear the burdens of the state in their place and station, should equally have a voice in the choice of those who represent and assess them with these burdens, (and reason, common equity and the usages of every well-conducted society, allow this much) then, such as feel themselves deprived of this common right or privilege, undoubtedly enjoyed

enjoyed by our ancestors in these lands, have reason to think they are aggrieved, and to wish matters were restored to this ancient and equitable footing. If it be an undeniable and notorious fact, that the Commons of Great Britain, so far from having the free choice in the Election of their Representatives in Parliament, have 320 members, a considerable Majority of the whole House of Commons, nominated and palmed upon them by 73 Peers. 94 Commoners, and the Treasury, does not this in effect totally annihilate their political existence or consideration.

If a majority in Parliament can act as independent of the will of the Nation, as if they held their seats quite independent of them; and if a minister can always secure a majority disposed to support his measures, does not this shew the necessity of shortening the duration of Parliamentary delegation? Power, in whatever hands it is lodged, needs checks to guard it from abuse, and hence the wisdom of our Constitution in providing such. But should the legislative and executive power concentrate in effect, by the above management, in one point, would not this destroy the equilibrium of the Constitution?

With regard to the Representation of the People in Parliament, if two paltry huts at Old Sarum claim right to send two members to the House of Commons, while a town consisting of 60,000 inhabitants, and others of the half and the third of that number can send none, tho' their population and commerce contribute largely to the revenue; is not this such a partial distribution of political liberty as needs and claims speedy reform? If corruption and perjury prevail on the present system at elections, of which the House seems to have been very sensible, as appears from their having enacted sixty-five statutes since the Revolution, in order to suppress such criminal practices; and if the time of the House, which ought to be devoted to public business, is spent in investigating these works of darkness, or trying the validity

validity of returns, while horrid scenes of corruption and perjury are laid open, without redress or remedy, and those that are thus illegally returned occupy for Sessions the fruits of such crimes, to the prejudice of those that were duly elected and their constituents, and of the Public at large :- If elections are in general at present so conducted, and success obtained by such means, as become a source of ruin to the candidates, unless the successful one betray his trust, and of riot, disorder, debauchery, and prostitution of every sort among the people; will any one presume to say, that a regard to the glory of God, to the honour of our holy religion, and the prosperity of the state, does not require something to be done to remedy such abuses?

Grant that rulers are bound, to employ the power with which they are invested for the good of the Community at large, and not merely for the emolument and aggrandizement of themselves and connections; then should the latter take place of the former in public measures, have the subjects no just reason to complain? As the law is intended for the protection of innocence, and the punishment of guilt, should its operation in certain cases tend to screen the guilty, or unduly protract their punishment; and to harass the innocent, or throw unnecessary delay in the way of their acquittal; then it is evident that some things need reform. The Reader can judge how far this applies to the trial of Mr Hastings, be he innocent or guilty, to instance no other. If those crimes are either pardoned, or slightly punished, which the great Lawgiver of the Universe, hath, by an irreversible edict, adjudged worthy of death: while those to which he hath affixed no capital punishment, are however punished with death; does not this say that something is deficient in our judicial procedure, --- that our administration of justice is not always agreeable to the eternal and unalterable rule of righteousness, if we allow the law of
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God to be entitled to that character? When Adultery, Child-murder and Duels pass with impunity, or a mulct; and theft is punished with death, is not this actually the case? If the obtaining of justice in certain circumstances must cost more than the value of the object in question: or if wealth can frustrate the ends of justice with respect to the poorer sort, by protracting her decision, or loading it with expences which they are unable to bear; then surely this must be allowed to be a grievance that claims redress. If the sanctuary of justice, which should be equally accessible to all, and difficult of access to none, is placed in a sequestered grove, and surrounded by a number of strong walls, with iron gates and bars, which are perpetually guarded by so many harpies whose voracious appetites must be sated before you can proceed farther; and if, after a tedious and expensive prosecution of your object, you have been able to approach her shrine, and obtain her decisive response in your favour, you find, as some have represented it, yourself stripped to the shirt, if against you, to the skin; must not this exceedingly deter from having recourse thither for justice, or render it in the issue a source of disappointment and misery? If no appeal lies respecting the enormous demands of such harpies, the guardians of justice and expounders of law, to common sense and common equity; if there is no check upon their rapacity, must not this make the evil arising from her remote and fortified situation, the more grievous and intolerable? If the laws to which the people are subjected be so multifarious and diversified, as not to be comprisable even in their abridged state in *thirty quarto volumes*; and if many of these are so intricate and perplexed as to afford abundant scope for the chicanery of professional men, while that maxim is adhered to—That ignorance of the law does not excuse the transgression of it, or abate the guilt of the transgressor, is there no room for reform here—no occasion for it? It is a maxim of unerring wisdom that where there is no law, there is no transgression, and a law not promulgated, or put within the reach of the subject, is to him the same as if it did not exist;

exist; whence he should not be amenable for the non-observance of it. If a man may be fined in L. 5 for catching a hare or partridge, as hath been lately the case on the game act in one of our courts of law, merely because the pannel was found exposing to sale a hare which he caught in a lane quite spent by the chase of the hounds—fined for presuming to make free with what the God of nature intended should be equally free and accessible to the poor as to the rich; does this abridge the rights of none? If a man dare not kill any part of the game which his own property supports, while his neighbour, who claims the rank and privileges of a gentleman, may trespass on his property at pleasure in pursuit of his sport; shall we not grant that this is partial, if not unjust? The Constituting Assembly of France did honour to their good sense, talents, and love of justice, by simplifying and abridging processes at law, and abolishing the exclusive right to game.

If a set of men are intruded on the people, under a pretence that they are their spiritual guides, and mean to watch with care and affection for their souls, respecting whom they have reason to believe, that they seek not them but theirs, that they regard not the cure of souls, but the benefice attached to it; and if their ghostly fathers exert every nerve to palm such upon them, and wreath the servile yoke about their neck, while their own judgment and choice, though free Britons and professed Christians, are treated with sovereign contempt; let any one say, if they have not reason to complain, that this is lording it over God's heritage, and trampling the rights of his people under foot; and also to ask reform both in Church and State.

If a part of the Community, however respectable in point of number and wealth, and however peaceable and loyal their deportment may have been, and great their zeal and readiness to contribute to the defence and support of the state, should nevertheless be punished with a legal incapacity of serving their King and Country, in common with their fellow subjects, in offices they are found qualified to fill, merely because they find themselves bound from conscience

conscience towards God, to dissent from the mode of worship established by human laws; have not such reason to petition for redress in this particular? It is scarce necessary to inform the Reader that the law of Patronage and the Test act, these engines of oppression, partiality and persecution, are alluded to above; and the leaders in France, with all their infidelity, have had the good sense and noble generosity, to free the subjects of this servile yoke, and break down this middle wall of partition.

If those in power can at pleasure plunge the nation into a war destructive of the prosperity of the state, of the means of subsistence to the poor, and of the lives of thousands of our fellow subjects, and fellow men, who have had no hand in the quarrel—a war which at the same time increases the public debt and public burdens, and, what is more serious still, may bring much blood and wrath on the land; and all this without being responsible for such measures to those who are chiefly affected by them; pray, is it not time to ask such reform as may happily tend to prevent these and the like fatal consequences in future? If such a war can be commenced without previously attempting, by every eligible mean in our power, to accommodate matters without having recourse to the sword; and if that war, when the ostensible object of it is answered, can be converted from a defensive to an offensive one, against the wishes, and contrary to the real interest of the people, who must notwithstanding bear the calamities to which it gives birth, and defray all its costs; while the invasion and seizure of another state, just emerging from thrall, that might and ought to have been prevented, is tamely permitted; does not this plainly say, that they have lost their due weight in the political scale of their Country, and may have their burdens increased at pleasure, without regard to their prosperity or respect to their inclinations? By the late partition of Poland, in which the Powers of Europe seem to acquiesce,

acquiesce, a much more dangerous precedent is set than ever France exhibited. Hereby kings are taught to seize, upon the most trivial pretence, the dominions of a weaker neighbour; and subjects to violate their allegiance to their lawful prince. If troops may be levied, and kept in pay, without acknowledging Parliament, as we have been told is in fact the case with respect to the regiment of French emigrants now in our service, does not this infringe on the salutary provisions of the Constitution, and also present a precedent that may prove very dangerous to the liberty of the subject?

If one part of the Community, who are equally under the protection of the law with their fellow subjects, are however robbed of the liberty so essential to Britons and a free people, by being dragged from every thing dear to them in the world, and forced to expose their lives, without their consent, in wars which perhaps prove ruinous to their native Country;—are forced to serve their King, though settled in a quite different line of life, just because they had done it before; do not such measures justify complaint, and claim some redress? I here refer to the oppressive and unconstitutional practice of impressing seamen into the navy---a practice which is a gross invasion of human liberty.

If our rulers can sanction a traffic in the human race, against which the wrath of Heaven is revealed,---a traffic which involves the violation of every principle of natural and precept of revealed religion, whence it is replete with disgrace, guilt and horror, in contempt of the law of God, and the remonstrances of the People, yea, in defiance of their own declared acknowledgement of its cruelty and injustice, and yet be no way amenable to the Public for such conduct; does not this manifest that the laws of justice and humanity, waving those of revealed religion, do not bear sway among us; and consequently that there is great need of reform? The fate of the

Bill, intended to restrict us from supplying foreign markets with slaves, too palpably shews how much we have trifled both with God and man in this important affair from first to last; and gives much ground to fear that the righteous Judge of all the earth will take the deliverance of the people in question, from the cruel scourge of this traffic, more immediately into his own hand, when he will make Britain and their accomplices curse the day ever they commenced it, and persevered in it in spite of every mean hitherto used to induce them to break it off. Should measures then be pursued both at home and abroad, which have brought misery and ruin on states more wealthy and potent than we, does not this justify our petitioning Government to change such measures, lest Heaven should be provoked to make us examples of similar vengeance?

If, in order to continue a war deemed by many unnecessary, if not unjust and iniquitous, at least in the present stage of it, and now become exceedingly unpopular, we are content, not only to employ our own troops at vast expence, but also to take those of some of the greatest despots in the world into our pay, Abaddon the ancient prince of Pandemonium excepted, thus expending the revenue when the finances of the Country are reduced, and our debt rapidly increasing; must not the candid say that such policy needs to be reformed? That disgrace to princes, who has deservedly acquired the odious epithet of the *Butcher of mankind*, has, for the meritorious deed of selling his subjects to the highest bidder, realized vast sums of British gold; and the honourable traffic is still continued! We have been also told, that the heroine of the North, that disgrace of her sex, and of humanity, and scourge of the human race, is to support the present crusade with a fleet, and 12000 of her troops to be kept in British pay; tho' her hostile dispositions and intentions against ourselves have been no secret, and, should Providence

vidence long spare her, may yet return. But a Herod and a Pilate were reconciled when the Saviour of men was to be condemned and executed; and many will take the liberty to say that the present combination of princes is founded neither on a rational attachment, on principles of equity, nor of benevolence towards the human kind; and, if so, cannot be honourable or permanent. There is cause to fear, that God hath a great sacrifice to make, when the nations are thus assembling, and indeed it is partly offered up already. How lamentable to reflect that large tracts of earth should be drenched with the blood, and fattened by the flesh of so many thousands of our fellow men, who, if we may believe an Apostle, fall a sacrifice even to their own lusts, that war in their members! To hire troops from such a worthless, mercenary being as the Prince of Hesse is reputed to be, and that upon the degrading terms on which he lets them, is a measure which perhaps is exceeded only by employing furious savages in reclaiming revolted subjects by scalping them. Is this the policy of a humane, enlightened and generous people? When a state can prosecute such political measures, is there not reason to fear all is not right? In a just cause, a nation relying on the aid of Heaven need not purchase the aid and alliance of the most worthless and despicable of mankind, at the expence of such sacrifices: for it is nothing with God to save by many or by few.

Rulers have a claim on the prayers of their subjects, and their countenance and support, in every undertaking that is pious, virtuous or praise-worthy; and have just reason to complain if this be denied: but beyond this we cannot, we dare not bid them, *God speed!* *I exhort* (saith an apostle) *that prayers be made for kings, and all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.* This exhortation seems plainly to import, not only that we ourselves should possess peaceable

dispositions, and maintain a pious and honest deportment, so approving ourselves worthy subjects, in which sense it is usually understood; but also that rulers both supreme and subordinate be lovers of peace and piety, and permit their subjects to live without being at any time molested by unnecessary war; or restricted in the rights of conscience by penal statutes, or test acts; or in the enjoyment of their civil claims by partial or oppressive laws, or unjust prosecutions.

If contractors and retainers to power are permitted to speculate the Public, and amass vast fortunes in a short time, without being under any proper check, or obliged, if found guilty by a strict and legal scrutiny into their conduct, to make restitution; have not the People reason to complain of the want of economy, if not of common honesty, in the management of their contributions to the necessary exigencies of the state? During the American war, in which the nation sustained so great a loss, what vast fortunes did many individuals acquire! This partly accounts for the rapid increase of our debt during that un auspicious period; and indeed is necessary to be taken into the account. In the East Indies also, it is too notorious that the same game hath been often played with impunity. There twenty millions of people have, by a charter, been assigned over for a certain annuity to a few as their undubitable property. If report merits any credit, the number there destroyed (we must not say murdered) in consequence of this equals the whole population of England. The same charter is again renewed for the farther term of twenty years, in consideration of L.500,000 per annum. The prosecution of a Hastings and others hath brought much serious matter to light, but does not seem to have fully checked such depredations. The Public have been told that a Mr Holand a contractor, hath defrauded them during the late war of L.200,000 for supplying
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the army with bullocks, which however he never delivered; and yet we have heard of no prosecution on that account. Should laws be like cob-webs that catch the small flies, and suffer the great to break through? What are the crimes for which many expire on a gibbet compared to this? Indeed the prosecution of such criminals, instead of reimbursing the nation or the sufferers, and answering the ends of justice, serves only to amerce us the more, as in the tedious and expensive trial of the culprit referred to above; while all evaporates at length in air. Have the People nothing to dread from these things? Do they not augment a load more serious than our national debt—treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God? Have they no interest then in wishing a reform that may happily tend to remedy these evils in future?

If large pensions are allowed to individuals, already possessed of independent fortunes, who have never perhaps done an essential service to their Country, at least none to merit such a largess, at the very moment that Country is on the eve of bankruptcy, (for insolvent we doubtless are) can this be viewed with indifference by those who bear and feel the burden? The Duke of Richmond has been often referred to as bearing an honourable rank in the honourable list of pensioners. This nobleman levies L.20,000 per annum of coal-duty in London alone, to which the poorest house-keeper must contribute his share. Do we justly reprobate the degraded situation of our fellow men, under such despotic governments as authorise their being bought and sold like cattle, in common with the soil on which they live? Do we detest that exercise of arbitrary power which consigns them over in hundreds, or in thousands as a pension to a parasite, or favourite Court minion? And yet does not something not very dissimilar take place even in free states, with this difference indeed, that

under the former governments the favourite is left to collect the benifon allowed him at his own expence and trouble: whereas in these, government does it for him? The princely pensioner instanced above, is quartered upon 6666 of his fellow subjects, allowing each to contribute annually to the revenue, at an average, L. 3 sterling. And do not some receive four or five salaries, each of which is sufficient to reward the merit of any servant of the Crown, at least so far as the prosperity of the Public is concerned? Ought these things to be so? How might that sum, properly distributed, refresh the bowels of the fatherless and orphan, who are to be met with every where!

Whatever some servile hirelings, or expectants of fee or pension for themselves or friends, may tell us about the great being involved in the same circumstances that affect the poor; and hence in no danger of taking part in the measures that produce them; tho' we in part allow the premisses, we cannot admit the conclusion: for it is not founded in fact, and verified by experience. Does not war impoverish a country, and yet it enriches individuals, who hence acquire an interest in promoting measures that are hurtful to the poor, who are least able to bear them? Will any say, that in proportion as the number of pensioners, and the amount of their pensions increase, the circumstances of the lower classes of society must be bettered; when all these pensions come out of the public purse, to which the poorest in the land, who consumes the least article of taxable commodities, contributes his share? Is it not well known, that in Countries where the lowest classes of mankind are in the most indigent and abject situation, there you will find some individuals in the most affluent, and princely circumstances; which seems to say, that they rise in proportion as the former are depressed: for they in fact enrich themselves by oppressing, or as the scriptures express it, grinding the faces of the poor, and breaking them in pieces. Indeed, viewing things in a proper light, the honour and

and interest of the whole Community, constitutes the honour and interest of the leading men in it; but how seldom do these consider the matter in this point of view? As things are generally conducted, too many in the higher ranks of life, seem to act as if they thought their own interest and that of the people quite distinct; and, like the scales of a balance, that as the one preponderates, the other must lose of its weight.

If those who are perpetually passing the most flattering encomiums on the Constitution of their Country, are found, nevertheless, to have so far invaded or eluded the wise and essential provisions of that Constitution, and changed in certain cases the mode of administering its laws, as to have in a manner metamorphosed it; is it not time for the subjects to demand the recovery and full exercise of these provisions? If those who are incessantly bawling against innovation, are found to be the greatest and most dangerous innovators,—to have so innovated on the Constitution of their Country, as to have left it very little of its original excellence, or, at least, to have greatly tarnished it; do they not furnish ground to suspect that their lavish eulogiums are merely intended to furnish a subterfuge under which to screen their own measures, or a veil to blind the eyes of the unwary? By their works, and not by their words, ye shall know them; for this is the only proper way to testify their attachment to the Constitution and happiness of their Country. The watermen may row one way, while they look another; but this will not do with those who manage the vessel of the state: for if the ostensible reasons of their measures, and the real ones appear in the event to be quite distinct, or opposite, they cannot long retain the confidence of the passengers, nor secure the cargo and vessel from shipwreck. Should we, instead of discovering the spirit, and copying the example of our celebrated ancestors, to whose patriotic exertions we are indebted, under Heaven, for the very privileges of
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which we boast, take a retrograde motion, and bring matters almost to the state in which they found them, and from which they so nobly restored them at the price of their best blood, instead of grafting improvements on what they have done to our hand; do we approve ourselves worthy of the character and immunities of Britons? We best testify our regard to the memory of our worthy progenitors, and our esteem of their patriotic deeds, by following their laudable example; not surely by lavishing praise upon them and their conduct, while our own takes a very different course. To shew the spirit of our ancestors, and the good effects of a strict observance of the wise and excellent provisions of the Constitution, as contrasted with modern men and measures, we need only observe, that when the right of suffrage stood on the broadest basis, and the exercise of it recurred more than once a year, there were not above *two or three* false returns or disputed elections, in the course of *above two centuries*, as appears from authentic records preserved in the Tower: whereas in a single Parliament of the present reign, the trials upon contested elections fill five large volumes.

If the subjects of a free State are restricted, by the dread of exorbitant fines, or tedious confinement, from offering their thoughts with freedom and candour on such topics as appear to them interesting to their Country and to mankind in general, while their deportment is peaceable and loyal, does not this give reason to suspect, that the measures of those in power cannot bear the light, at least that they fear so; and reason to complain that the dearest rights of a rational being, as a member of civil society, are attempted to be wrested from them,—namely, that of forming some judgment of the nature and tendency of such measures as involve the happiness of millions of our fellow men, as well as our own, and expressing this on proper occasions, with a decent but manly freedom? In pursuance of this plan however, should any attempt to publish an impartial Newspapers,

paper, from its first appearance, he or they are marked out as the object of political vengeance; and the most illiberal and unworthy measures are vigorously prosecuted to suppress the same; which have had their effect in more instances than one. The exercise of the above valuable right is, perhaps, the strongest security a people can have for the continued possession of their natural and civil rights and privileges; and the best check to these encroachments, to which the operation of power is too apt to verge: whence every attempt to wrest it from them, is in effect an attack upon their liberty, or, what amounts to the same thing, their chief security of enjoying it. If this common right is abused, (and what right may not?) to the purposes of sedition or licentiousness, the laws, which in these cases provide a remedy, are open, independent of the arbitrary decisions of interested men, and the officious zeal of hired spies and informers. When it is, and must be granted, that things are brought to such a pass as to need reform, is it not hard to make the very mention of this a crime, and to serew and torture words and phrases, uttered in honest simplicity, or rashly spoken in a moment of heat and irritation, in order to affix guilt, where perhaps thanks is rather due? Need one scruple to say, that by the perpetration of these, or much worse crimes, if that character belongs to them, the present reigning Family ascended the throne, and Britain obtained her boasted Constitution: but some have remarked, perhaps with too much truth, that those in power are averse to every change in public measures, and loud in condemning them, however necessary and beneficial to the Public, but those to which they owe that power; or, in other words, reprobate every change or revolution in government, but that which brought themselves, or ancestors to the throne. Hence, what is deemed a virtue in our forefathers, in their posterity is reputed a crime. The man who discovers,

vers, and lays open the latent causes of a dangerous disease, while it admits of a remedy, merits well of the patient, and recommends his skill in his profession. Remove the cause, and the effect will of course cease;—reform the abuses that too palpably exist, and complaints will no more be heard: but without this, exertions of power to suppress them, tho' they may produce a temporary suspension, and a seeming acquiescence in public measures, are but like skinning over a dangerous wound, while the matter is permitted to fester at bottom, and must break forth in future with greater violence, when the application even of the remedy becomes both hazardous and precarious. On this important point, the Reader is referred to Mr Erskine's excellent Address to the Friends to the Liberty of the Press, at their second meeting, which he will find subjoined:—a Gentleman who doubtless merits well of his Country, and of mankind, for his noble exertions, in concert with his worthy, Patriotic Friends, in the honourable cause of human freedom.

If monopolies of various kinds are allowed to exist, to the palpable detriment of trade and commerce, and the restriction of the liberty of a free people, with a view to aggrandize a few individuals, and increase the influence of the executive power; can this be justified on principles of common equity, or sound policy? If among the subjects of a free state some claim an exclusive right to these, or make the acquisition of that right so expensive as to exclude, perhaps, the most ingenious, and deserving of encouragement; does not this injure the interest of the Community at large, by preventing all the salutary effects of a laudable competition; or greatly abridge the liberty of individuals, whence both have ground to complain? This exclusive right too, like every other partial system, may enrich and aggrandize a few, but it is at the expence of Society in general.

If self-elected magistrates and council-men assume
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the power of nominating their successors in office, of deliberating and deciding on the concerns of their fellow citizens, and expending at discretion these revenues to which they in common contribute, without being amenable for such conduct; is this agreeable to the rules of common justice and equity, and calculated to promote that mutual esteem and confidence which should ever subsist betwixt a people and their rulers, as the surest bond and pledge of social order? And yet, is it not well known, what a bustle this has occasioned, and what violent struggles have been made to retain this usurped, arbitrary, and impolitic power?

If, acting upon similar principles, tho' more extensively pernicious in their operation, the higher powers can enter into expensive treaties, which seem not to consult the true honour or interest of this Country, while they evidently promote the views and aggrandizement of other powers; is not this a grievance which merits inquiry and redress? We have been lately informed, that in the months of March and April last, the following treaties have been made, which yet were not laid before Parliament till the last week of its sitting; when, the printing of them for the inspection of members was refused. A treaty with the King of Sardinia binding us to pay him L.200,000 a year, to enable him to keep up an army, *to protect his own dominions*; and also binding us to keep a fleet in the Mediterranean, to be employed only as that Court, in concert with ours, may agree. Besides a treaty with Russia, obliging us to continue the war, as long as the Empress, whose turn of mind is well known, may think proper to give it her aid and sanction! And one with that venerable character, the Prince of Hesse Cassel, in the usual style, namely, that he shall receive a certain stipulated subsidy, for so long a period, from Britain, for his troops now in our pay, or that may, during the war, be taken into our service; besides a fixed price for every one who may desert, die, or be killed in action? If such treaties can be formed, while the probable consequences are blood-shed, carnage, misery and disgrace, without the prospect of reaping any one valuable advantage to ourselves; is it not time, in the
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name of Heaven, that such disorders should be rectified, such abuses prevented †? Admitting the truth of the above treaties as represented, those that can practise, and such as tamely submit, without a single remonstrance, to such usage, are much on a level; and yet a Majority of 140 in Parliament have given their suffrage to the prosecution of these measures, tho' at the imminent risk, in addition to the above evils, of bringing the vengeance of America and other neutral powers on our head;—the continuance of them, till France is forced, by the arms of the Combined Powers, to submit implicitly to our and their terms! Any one of common penetration will see, that this is not so practicable as we fondly imagine, tho' our finances could support the continuance of the war. We thought and boasted to have it in our power to give America what terms of peace we pleased, but had the mortification, after expending much blood and treasure,

† Too many circumstances concur to shew how futile, or rather hurtful continental connections have proved to Britain; and how little confidence is due to the faith of Courts and Cabinets, when their own interest seems to interfere. Says the Editor of a newspaper, "The ostensible reasons for dividing Poland were the happiness and comfort of the people. What was the real motive? Increase of power. They have just as good cause to divide Britain, for here they would find some wealth; and there is no great want of charity in saying, that we believe they would if they had the means. But they are our allies—our friends! Was not Prussia the ally of Poland?"

Respecting the confidence due to the faith of Courts, the Editor of another paper observes, "The treatment of Stanislaus affords at all events a clue to the principles which actuate the concert of princes. They wage an insatiate and exterminating war for the death of a king whose conduct was at least dubious, and they treat at the same time with every indignity a Sovereign in whose popular conduct even the furious aristocracy of Mr Burk could find nothing to disapprove." May we not add, that the treatment of that Gentleman, de la Fayette, gives no amiable discovery of the justice and humanity of one of the princes chiefly referred to above; but Heaven at this day unhappily permits kings to wound the regal character with their own hands, by leaving some of them to perpetrate deeds which disgrace humanity, and will make their name and memory unfavoury while sun and moon endure, and, if they obtain not grace timely to repent, themselves unspeakably more wretched thro' eternity than they can now make the most wretched object of their unjust resentment.

treasure, to be obliged to submit without reserve to their terms! Hence the propriety of that caution, which a monarch once gave, *Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast as he that putteth it off.* O tempora! O mores!

Have not the people reason to complain, where Episcopal government is established in the Church, of the many unhappy consequences that result from the rigorous exaction of tithes? Does not this preclude their edification by the services of religion, and tend to demean the Clergy in their eyes? Hath not the husbandman special cause to complain, when he must pay at the rate of L. 15 per cent. common interest included, for any sums he may lay out on the improvement of his lands; because another claims a tenth part of the produce of his labour, industry and expence, while he contributes not one farthing to that improvement? Must not this too retard improvements in Agriculture, and be productive of oppressive measures? How absurd is it, to refer to the Mosaic institution as investing the Clergy with a right to the tithes! The tribe of Levi made one of twelve of the whole children of Israel, and in the division of the land of Canaan came not in for their dividend; God intending their subsistence should be more immediately derived from the people, to increase their mutual confidence and regard, and furnish scope to the exercise of their piety and benevolence; whence the tithes came to be assigned them for their portion. But under the Christian dispensation, one faithful Teacher of the Gospel may discharge the duties of his sacred function to several hundreds of his fellow men; whence, should he receive a tenth part of the produce of their labours, this would be more in proportion than tho' the ancient Priesthood had claimed the one-half of the produce of the whole land of Israel. But tho' it had been otherwise, no argument can be drawn from that abrogated system in favour of the modern claims of Prelatical churchmen. With equal propriety might we plead God's ancient grant of the land of promise to the Jews, as a reason for our reviving and recommencing the frantic expeditions called crusades, in order to recover that land from its present possessors. To pretend a Divine right now to tithes, would

be ridiculous; and for human laws to alienate an unjust proportion, or indeed any proportion at all, of the fruits of a man's labour and industry, for the purpose of supporting one to teach him, while his own consent is not asked, and he is denied a voice in the choice of him, is equally absurd. Have not those then some ground of reflexion, who are obliged to contribute a large revenue to support a certain class of men in pomp and affluence, no way befitting the nature and ends of their function; many of whom neither exemplify the spirit of their office, nor discharge its duties, and all of whom are palmed upon them without having their consent so much as solicited?

Connected with the above are the poor rates, the right of distributing which is appended to the Church. If subjects are assessed with these, to the rate perhaps of L.60 per annum, for each pauper on the roll, as we are assured is in fact the case in South Britain, while much less than a fourth part of this sum, with their own industry, might suffice; must not this be felt a grievance, and furnish such a copious fund for corruption and speculation as demands correction?

Are the laws respecting Debtor and Creditor just and equitable in their nature, and no way oppressive in their operation? Some of the most respectable members of both Houses of Parliament seem to be of a quite different mind, as appears from the sentiments they have publicly delivered on the subject. The editor of a paper, who is seldom disposed to plead the cause of reform, remarks on this point; "The rejection of the Debtor and Creditor Bill, "is a new proof, that there may be men so bigotted to "the mere technical habits of a profession as, while they "are obliged to admit the existence of a grievance, will "do nothing to remove that grievance themselves, nor "suffer any other person to remove it."

If the extension of the Excise laws prove an engine of oppression to the commercial part of the nation; a dead weight on the wheels of commerce; a snare to the conscience of many; and a mean of laying many arbitrary restrictions on the liberty of individuals, without necessity, or ultimately benefiting the revenue; have not those
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who find themselves hereby agrieved, some reason to complain? Every unconstitutional exercise of power becomes dangerous in its precedent, and arbitrary and oppressive in its operation. The number of individuals employed in the Excise alone, if formed into an army, might suffice to defend their country; all of whom are not possessed of habits to exercise their commission with moderation. The keeping up a large standing army in times of peace, when a militia might answer the same purpose; and the calling in the military to quell every little tumult, to the great prejudice and imminent danger of the peaceable and unoffending inhabitants, does not discover great economy, nor give much reason to admire the wisdom and humanity of our police; tho' the liberty of the subject were not hereby endangered. The ostentatious vanity of keeping possession of an useless rock †, which has cost Britain ten thousand times more than it is worth, in proud defiance of a kingdom to which nature hath assigned it, and that would richly reward us for surrendering it, falls under the same description.

That all that hath been advanced is not mere hypothesis, the intelligent Reader will be able to judge, tho' the cases referred to have not in every instance been specified. If all the foregoing particulars, and others that might be mentioned, are founded in fact, is it surprising the *swinish multitude*, to use the courtly phrase of the metamorphosed champion of aristocracy, should grunt? and would it not be hard to punish this too natural expression with fines or imprisonments? But should their loyal and peaceable petitions, specifying their grievances, and craving redress, be treated with indifference, if not with contempt, by those very persons who are sacredly bound, by the radical principles of the Constitution of their Country, and the nature of the trust reposed in them, to listen to these petitions, and grant the

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prayer

† Gibraltar.

prayer of them, if found just and constitutional; will not this farther manifest the expedience of reform, and afford an additional and powerful plea to the friends of that measure, wherewith to justify their past conduct in the cause, and urge the necessity of their farther perseverance? But after all, allowing the preceding grounds of complaint to be ever so just, they do not, even taken together, amount to a solid reason for attempting any radical change in our Constitution, as they flow not from its defects but perversion: for Britons have still much to boast of, if they are only careful to transmit it, by a wise and timely reform, unimpaired to posterity. If the repeating of such grounds of complaint, and they are but merely repeated, give offence to any, let them reflect, that it is the enemies of reform who oblige its friends to do so in their own defence, and for the vindication of the cause in which they are embarked, from the foul aspersions thrown upon it, and those that would support it, by ignorant or designing men.

It being evident, that various abuses of a serious nature exist in and under our administration, which demand reform, and justify application for it; it remains we should examine some of the objections against it. That a Christian may so far concern himself with public affairs, as to solicit in his place the existing powers, that preside over the Community of which he is a member, in connexion with a greater or smaller number of his fellow subjects, to rectify what may appear amiss, and supply what may be wanting, under their administration, to further the happiness of the whole; is a proposition so just and self-evident, that it is surprising any should call the truth and equity of it in question. If the things complained of are offensive to God, and hurtful to society, without which there is no reason to complain; then a Christian may, nay ought, in his sphere, to testify against them, as opportunities offer, and to exert himself, by every lawful mean in his power

power, to have these things effectually done away; that they bring not ruin to the state in their train. To instance no other of the many moral evils that flow from our departure from the Constitution, the statutes of the House of Commons, already referred to, allow, that much corruption and perjury have taken place among us, to restrain which was their ostensible object; and if we may credit the holy Scriptures, these prevailing, sooner or later bring the wrath of Heaven on a people; and even profane history shews how destructive they have proved to once powerful states and empires. Is it then unbecoming the Christian character to deprecate these evils; to remonstrate against them; and to use every justifiable mean to prevent the fatal consequences? Christianity was never intended to extinguish the love of one's country, and repress patriotic exertions for its good: but to produce the very opposite effects; and how to reconcile a concern for the glory of God, and the prosperity of the state, with total silence or indifference in cases where these are affected, I am utterly at a loss to know. Such as recommend a neutral spirit here, or perhaps to lend all our weight to the scale of public corruption, and exemplify the same in their own conduct, may approve their loyalty to the ruling Powers, according to the views some entertain of loyalty; but I venture to say, they hereby evince their disloyalty to God, and their disaffection to their fellow subjects. The prudent man foreseeth the evil, and not only hideth himself, but warneth his neighbours. There are signs of the times which all but infidels may perceive, and the attempt to point out these is both laudable and benevolent. Saith our Lord, He that is not for me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad. It is no very honourable character, however general and highly applauded among men, to be a dumb dog that cannot bark, when danger may be foreseen on every hand. Much better incur

reproach, and even danger, by performing a faithful and benevolent, tho' unwelcome service to our fellow creatures, than share their smiles and bounty at the expence of an opposite conduct.

But these very persons, who loudly condemn all interference in ~~Christians~~ public measures, tho' circumstanced as above, do not let their own moderation be known to all men, as an apostle exhorts; for they evidently take a side, and that is in fact, in supporting these very evils by which God is insulted and provoked, and their Country injured, and exposed to the frowns of Heaven; while their zeal on that side leads them to blame, reproach, and perhaps persecute, those who see it not their duty to copy such an example. If a state was wholly Christian, which their principle and conduct in effect deny ours to be, where would you find any to concern themselves with public affairs, on the supposition that this accords not with the Christian character? But such counteract their own principle in the common concerns of life: for they deem others bound to them by promises and obligations, and exact their lawful debts as well as other men. Government, in its very nature, implies certain conditions equally binding on rulers and subjects, and certain stipulations, expressed or understood, to the strict observance of which both parties become in effect bound. As every government, however modified, should consult, and as far as the state of things will admit, secure the happiness of the people, for whose good it is primarily intended; when it deviates from this great object, they have as good right to complain, and to ask redress or reform, as a man has to crave his lawful debt, or a master to demand the stipulated labours from his servant; for tho' rulers are the masters of their subjects, considered individually, so far as civil order and due subordination require this, yet they are, and ought to know that they are, the servants of the Community at large, and acquire all their

their authority from it. The legal exercise of that authority too, results from its being employed for their good, and edification, and not for their oppression or destruction: for means and instruments are always to be used in subservience to the end proposed, and are no farther valuable than they serve to promote it.

When God requires that Christians should be subject to the Powers that be, as being ordained of himself, it is evident he did not mean to subject them to the arbitrary will or caprice of tyrants and oppressors: for lawful authority ceases when it comes to be so abused, which he describes as being a terror to evil doers, and a praise and an encouragement to those that do well. Should those in power prove the reverse of this, and counteract the very end of the ordination of Magistracy, will any one scruple to say that they forfeit that subjection, to which they would otherwise possess a lawful claim? Was it resistance to the ordinance of God, when Daniel would not cease to pray to him in obedience to the Royal edict, which was ratified by the highest authority in the empire? Were the three Hebrew worthies guilty of this, when they chose rather to be cast into a fiery furnace, than to fall down in homage to the image which the tyrant had set up? If passive obedience be a duty in subjects, and every authority be lawful, howsoever exercised; then doubtless they were guilty in refusing that obedience: but God himself determined this point by the deliverance which he wrought for them. If he required the nations to be obedient to that tyrant, which some would view as sanctioning the most arbitrary and despotic exercise of authority, it was not by any express precept or declaration promulgated to them for that purpose; but by putting them in his power, whence resistance became imprudent and ineffectual, but would not be culpable so soon as Providence put it in their power: for then subjection ceased to be a duty, and resistance a sin. No power on earth hath a right to be
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obeyed any farther than their mandates comport with the unalterable law of Heaven; whence the claim to passive obedience, and non-resistance to tyranny and oppression, is a mere phantom of human pride, cherished by culpable ignorance. The plain matter of fact is, the Judge of all the earth may put a sinful people in the power of a tyrant, who is his scourge to chastise them, while he by no means sanctions or approves the exercise of his authority, or forbids them to rid themselves of this evil so soon as they have the rational prospect of being able to do it without incurring a greater †.

When our Lord commands us to render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's; his command evidently implies, that Christians are not to take the matter upon trust or human authority—that they are to examine for themselves what these things are, that they may not confound them, when they come to interfere, and where the line is to be drawn between them. As the things of Cesar include the measures of human policy, and all the claims of those in authority, our Lord's injunction must be understood as requiring of his people some knowledge of these—that they should examine their nature and tendency, to learn how far they are just and lawful; that is, how far they agree to, or vary from the unerring dictates of his word: for without such inquiry, they may blindly render to Cesar the things that are God's, as those who hearken to man rather than to him, and plead the right of rulers to implicit or passive obedience, plainly do. From the means of acquiring such knowledge,

† The Devil himself rules by Divine permission over wicked men for their punishment; and no despot that ever existed could claim an empire so ancient and extensive: but does that permission give him a just title to their obedience? Kings, and all in lawful authority, have a divine right to govern well; but a divine right to govern ill, is an absurdity; and to assert it, is blasphemy. They may as unquestionably forfeit their right to allegiance, as a subject his right to protection.

ledge, however, and the right of making a proper use of it, some would entirely exclude the most useful and necessary part of the Community—the labourer and mechanic; telling us that their sole business is application to their respective callings, implicit obedience to their superiors, and contentment with, and thankfulness for whatever portion of liberty their rulers are pleased in their wisdom to allow them. According to them, a flock of sheep have as good a right to inquire into the conduct of their shepherd, and are fully as well qualified to conduct such an inquiry, as subjects to investigate the measures of their governors, or pass any judgment upon them. These people that know not the law, are accursed, was the cry of aristocracy of old; and too many seem disposed to adopt it still. To deny a nation's right of judging and acting accordingly for itself, would be to make the Revolutionists in 1688 guilty of rebellion both against God and their King; and, of course, the present reigning Family no better than usurpers: for their right to the Throne, rests entirely on the right of the People to refuse obedience to authority unconstitutionally exercised, of which they must be allowed so far to judge; and to transfer that authority, when its exercise becomes a bar to the secure possession of their legal, or constitutional rights. A blind zeal which they dignify with the name of loyalty, leads some to adopt a principle, which in its native construction lays the ax to the root of our Constitution, and absolves the subjects from their allegiance to their lawful Prince—a dangerous principle indeed! for Burke's salvo, who saw, yet wished to evade this necessary consequence, is too silly and ridiculous to deserve a serious reply; namely, that tho' the nation possessed such a power or right at the Revolution, yet, by exercising it then, they for ever denuded themselves and posterity of it. Let such as can, believe this absurdity.

—If a nation possesses an inherent right to make ma-

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terial alterations in their government, and to change their rulers, when they grasp at more power than the law authorises, or is consistent with the safety and prosperity of the state, the exercise of which right we see so much celebrated in our Ancestors: why should any tax their fellow subjects for merely petitioning the Legislature, in such a mode as the Constitution recognises and allows, to reform the abuses that have gradually crept into the Administration, till they have arisen to their present threatening magnitude?

Many seem widely to mistake some apostolic injunctions, respecting submission to the higher powers, as if the rules by which a few Christian converts were bound to demean themselves in a great empire, were obligatory on a whole state, in matters that regard their political existence and external prosperity. When a whole nation rests satisfied with the form of its government, tho' both arbitrary and oppressive, and have no idea of a better, its laws are binding in all cases where they do not interfere with the laws of Heaven, as well as the laws of the best constituted government; and it would be rebellion in individuals, however enlightened, to oppose their administration, or refuse subjection; tho' they may, and ought to propose their sentiments with freedom. But when the People in general come to see the defects or excesses of their government, and code of laws; and hence earnestly intreat the concurrence of their rulers to redress the one, and improve the other; opposition to this, tho' even by these rulers, becomes not only bad policy, but rebellion against the national will; which, when properly expressed, constitutes the law and supreme authority, where it does not thwart the revealed will of Heaven. This right, however, inherent in the great mass of the people, is to be exercised with the utmost caution, and only upon occasions of the greatest emergency. As to civil government, Christianity only confirms
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the laws of nature, and enforces the duties we previously owed in virtue of the Constitution of Society itself, by new and additional motives; but does by no means invest human governors with any super-added powers. In this view, the kingdom of Christ, and the kingdoms of the world are quite distinct, and should not on any consideration be blended, tho' they too often are by human policy; which renders them an heterogenial mass, consisting of discordant materials, like the image which the king of Babylon saw in vision—partly gold and partly clay; but the latter prevails, so as to tarnish and adulterate the former. These observations will not be deemed foreign to our purpose, when the arguments of opponents are adverted to. It is time to proceed to some other objections against reform in present circumstances.

That reform is at present unseasonable, some argue from the late revolution in a neighbouring kingdom, and the commotions and distractions which still exist there, and partly in other states. Say they, Shall we attempt to repair our house in a hurricane? This objection, tho' more specious than solid, may weigh with some who have the interest of their Country at heart. Without doubt, however, some avail themselves of it, who manifest that to them reform is at all times equally unseasonable. Even these grant the house needs repair, and so far we agree. But though we would not chuse a hurricane to repair a fabric in, no more than they; yet if the hurricane has overtaken us, and the fabric be in danger by it, is it not both prudent and necessary to do every thing in our power to prop and support it, lest we should be buried in its ruins, or reduced to the necessity of building one anew? But some will perhaps ask, Who or what hath brought on this hurricane, and by what means, and for what ends is it continued? Whatever may be the proper answer to this, and wherever the blame may in whole or in part lie, it is surely wise and safe to use the most eligible means to prevent,
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with respect to ourselves, the serious effects of that storm which blows in the political horizon, and hath already produced such consequences. The old proverb applies here, *when your neighbour's house is on fire, it is time to take care of your own*. Instead therefore of urging the present situation of a neighbouring nation as a reason against immediate reform, we should learn a lesson from it, to avoid with caution whatever tended to bring them into a convulsed state. Similar causes naturally produce corresponding effects; and it is both easier and more safe to prevent evil than remove it. That certain glaring abuses exist in the state, is undeniable; and those who would perpetuate them, or forbear to redress them in present circumstances, discover neither wisdom, nor their knowledge of human affairs. The sooner these disappear, the better. What would we think of that physician who should address his patient; Why, I perceive that your constitution is greatly impaired—that the powers of animal life are so debilitated and deranged, as not to be able to perform their functions; and I also see what would operate a gradual and effectual cure: but I must delay making the proper application, till some future occasion which may happen to prove more opportune? Would we admire either his wisdom or humanity? Such quacks are those in politics, who plead that we are not yet ripe for reform, or that this is not the proper season; should charity permit us to ascribe it to their ignorance.

But some object, that it is dangerous to grant what the people solicit, however just; because they will not be content with moderate reform; and once begin, it is hard to say where things will end. To this we might shortly reply, Let them be tried, and if they discover such a disposition, check it in time. But it is not fact, that they are always so unreasonable in their demands, and so hard to satisfy, provided they are discreetly used. People seldom, if ever run, to such extremes, till matters are pushed

too far, and their reasonable requisitions be so long neglected, that their patience is exhausted. The Americans would be satisfied with much less than they at last obtained, as appeared from their petitions and remonstrances, if we had possessed the wisdom timely to respect their complaints, and by meeting their wishes, conciliate their affection. The same holds of France, for had not their rulers both in Church and State, so long opposed and despised the too just complaints of the people, till matters were brought to such a crisis, that nothing but a miracle could prevent a revolution; that kingdom had not of late undergone such changes, and been unhappily subjected to such calamities. - All this their rulers might have foreseen, and, humanely speaking, prevented: for to their obstinate conduct the excesses all along committed are to be in a great measure traced; tho' Divine providence will doubtless employ them to accomplish its own purposes. The beginning of strife, says the wise man, is like the breaking in of water, which may at first be easily checked, but left to itself a little, and it becomes irresistible. With equal propriety may a man refuse to pay his lawful debt, lest his creditor, not content with that, should insist on more; as refuse to the wishes and petitions of the people what is just and reasonable, from a pretence that this will not satisfy them. Such a surmise offers them the highest indignity, and is calculated to produce the very effects it is intended to prevent. Some of the meekest creatures become very fierce and dangerous when insulted and roused. The people, in their collective capacity, are like a huge animal that will lead, if treated gently; but should you attempt to drive it violently, it will turn short upon you, perhaps trample you under foot.

The advice of the old counsellors, who had stood before Solomon, to his son and successor Rehoboam, discovers a knowledge of human nature, seldom to be found with courtiers; and had that prince duly

attended to it, the kingdom of the ten tribes would not have been torn from him, and many subsequent calamities might have been prevented. "How do ye advise (says he) that I may answer this people? And they spake unto him, saying, If thou wilt be a servant unto this people this day, and wilt serve them, and answer them, and speak good words to them, then they will be thy servants for ever."

1 Kings 12. 6, 7. Such an answer would have quite satisfied the people, and sent them home rejoicing. They do not exhort him to insist upon his royal prerogative, and threaten them with an armed force, and the ring-leaders among them with heavy fines, and long imprisonment. What they advised him to, however, if complied with, so far from degrading the monarch in their eyes, would have greatly dignified him, and secured his kingdom entire. "But (it is added) he forsook the council of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and who stood before him." Here commenced his misfortune. His young counsellors and courtiers, instead of advising to lenitive measures,—to promise an alleviation of their burdens, a reduction of their taxes, prompted him to reply to their humble but firm petition and remonstrance, in the high-flying strains of regal authority; but let the result say, if in all this they consulted the honour of his person, and the stability of his throne, putting the peace and prosperity of his people out of the question. They thought to avenge him on the populace, for their supposed insolence, in presuming to complain of grievances, and petition for redress, and at once crush their spirits by the mere dint of authority: but, weak man, the vengeance retorted on him, and his flattering minions, one of whom he had the mortification to see stoned in his presence, while he durst not attempt his rescue. Such was the fate of Adoram, *who was over the tribute*, or his financier,

nancier, in the discharge of which trust he had probably, like his brethren in office, oppressed the people, and so made himself obnoxious to their resentment. These things are written for the admonition of princes and statesmen; for human nature, amidst the various modifications it may assume, is at bottom in every age and country the same. Be these counsellors, old or young in years or office, who advise their prince to treat the people roughly, and use coercive measures, when they presume to complain, and solicit a redress of grievances, even tho' they should fail in that decorum and humble obeisance, to which the great are accustomed, we must pronounce them young in experience and understanding. By means of such young counsellors, Britain, like Judah, had America torn from her; and by means of such counsels we are now involved in a war which will bring us both disgrace and loss. But Heaven in both cases means to chastise us for our sins: for great is the fierce anger of the Lord which these have kindled against us! This very reason is assigned by the sacred historian for the important revolt or revolution referred to above: *Wherefore the king hearkened not unto the people, for the cause was from the Lord, that he might perform his saying which the Lord spake by Abijah his prophet.*

But some would encounter the applications of the People for reform in the State, by the old sarcasm, *Physician, heal thyself*—reform yourselves as individuals, before you presume to apply for reform in Parliament, be the defects and abuses of Parliamentary delegation, &c. what they will†. It is to be wished,

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† For the above, and some other equally valid objections against reform, the Reader may consult some late publications on that side of the question, and particularly a periodical one entitled the *Dunfermline Repository*. The Editor, in the prospectus of the work, disclaims all party connections, and promises ever to approve himself the strenuous advocate of the sacred Rights of Man; but how far he has adhered to this patriotic declaration, the candid and impartial

they themselves would bear in mind on this head the old adage, *Example is more efficacious than precept*. It must, no doubt, be allowed, that every one who solicits public reform in such things as require it, and indeed every member of society, should reform whatever may be amiss in his own conduct, and, so far as his influence can go, promote reformation in the circle of his friends and acquaintance: but is there no reason to suspect that the anti-reformers have no just cause to say to their brethren in this respect, *Stand by, for we are more righteous than you?* If report deserves any credit, such is the influence of their antireforming principles, that at a meeting of one of their clubs, every sentence in their colloquial discussions was embellished by the insertion of the heroic phrase,—G—d d—n me, and that even in the presence of a venerable Clergyman; whence a Gentleman, hearing of this circumstance, humorously remarked, 'That their society might take to itself the singular designation of—The G—d D—n me Club. That report, true or false, would find no place here, did not some retainers to that cause deal in retailing every little anecdote, whether fabricated or not, that tends to place the wished for reform and its friends in a ridiculous light, tho' these may have been already so much hacknied as to become now quite stale.

If the head and master of a family is bound to set the example of self-reformation before his children and domestics, the better to secure regularity of conduct on their part; then surely the immoral lives of too many of the subjects, perhaps even of those who apply for the reform of public abuses—(abuses that are too flagrant to admit a denial, and go too deep

partial may judge. His words are, "At a period like the present, the Public will doubtless wish to know something of his political sentiments: He can only say that he disclaims all party-connections, and that while he will ever approve himself the strenuous advocate of the sacred Rights of Man, he will never propagate opinions inimical to the peace and happiness of society."

not to be dreaded and lamented,) so far from justifying opposition in any to such reform, that very consideration more forcibly inculcates the necessity of granting the prayer of such petitions, as rulers would not be accessory to the corruption and consequent ruin of their subjects. What would we think of a Parent, Master, or Magistrate, who should answer his children, servants, or subjects, who respectfully requested that he would reform some things by which their happiness and just claims were materially affected; My Children, Servants, or Subjects, I cannot deny the equity of your request, and that you have too just ground to make it; but ye too need reform in some things, and till you have accomplished this, presume not to apply to me for any such purpose, for your requests shall be worse than in vain, tho' your ruin should inevitably follow? What good can be expected from Royal edicts for the *Encouragement of Piety and Virtue, and Preventing and Punishing Vice, Profaneness, and Immorality*; if vice and impiety in their various forms are found to exist in the higher departments, and insinuate themselves into the politics of our Country, whence their influence spreads like so many contaminated streams from an infected fountain? The order of nature, and the claims of morality and religion on the matter say; Let rulers of all descriptions set the example of reforming every existing abuse within their particular sphere and influence, would they promote reformation of manners among their subjects and inferiors, and as they must answer it to the King of kings for neglecting to exert the authority with which they are invested for that important purpose.

Tho' we cordially join with the opposers of reform, in lamenting that depravation of manners which too universally prevails; yet can we not join with them in urging this as a valid objection against the reform in question, fully persuaded the want of this hath had a fatal influence on the spread of that

very depravation thro' the nation. Such indeed the prevalence of pernicious principles and vicious practices among all ranks and descriptions in the state, that the lamentation of the prophet may with too much propriety be adopted respecting the land in general: *Ab sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters: they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the holy One of Israel unto anger, they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? ye will revolt more and more: the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head, there is no soundness in it; but wounds and bruises, and putrifying sores†. Dare we say that the reason which God gave, at an after period, to another prophet, to justify the awful procedure of his providence toward that devoted people, does not apply to Britain and her dependencies, he himself being Judge? The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not‡. If this heavy charge is really applicable to our nation, with all our distinguishing advantages; and I suppose few, in the least acquainted with our public character, will have the temerity to deny it, may not the Judge of the whole earth transfer to us the doom subjoined to that charge? And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; but I will recompence their way upon their head. If the far greater part of the individuals that constitute the civil Community need reform, how absurd is it to say that the whole aggregate of the people needs none, and that it is too soon to ask reformation at the head and spring of government, till each of the subjects reform himself? Such insinuations can scarce be supposed to be the genuine language of virtue, and the result of true patriotism.*

† Isa. i. 4, 5, 6.

‡ Ezek. 9. 9.

patriotism. No individual, or number of individuals can reform all their fellow subjects; but tho' they could, their right to petition for reform in the state rests on no such basis, and none would employ such arguments to dissuade them from it, that have a proper view of the matter, but, I had almost said, the servile tools of a party. The children of wisdom and virtue are consistent, nor will attempt to set the order of nature and the rule of moral conduct at variance: for must not every attempt to purify the streams prove futile and unavailing, as well as preposterous, while the fountain is suffered to remain corrupt, and still pour forth on every side its infected waters? What is morally evil cannot be politically just and good: nor can the political evils complained of, all of which imply the breach of the Divine law, that immutable rule of moral rectitude, be morally good, and beneficial to society in their consequences. Hence, such as plead for their continuance, or that these roots of bitterness, by which so many are defiled, as well as enriched, should be spared, are in effect the advocates of vice, and the patrons of immorality, tho' they should not mean so. Therefore when they speak fair, and assume the semblance of a virtuous concern, implicitly believe them not; for there is some reason to suspect that other objects than the love of their Country, and of virtue and religion inspire their zeal, and stimulate their exertions in such a cause.

While they tell us much of the corruption of human nature, and the impossibility of framing any form of government, or adopting any regulations in that which is already formed, where it will not one way or other find scope, as a reason why no reform should be attempted, do they not furnish some pretext for such suspicion; as they can scarce be thought ignorant that if this argument proves any thing, it proves too much, and hence is not for their purpose: for it equally militates against every institution both human

human and divine, whose object is to check the ebullitions of that corruption, and regulate human conduct? The plain result is, as you cannot extricate the corrupt passions, and propensities of mankind by any reform you can effectuate, restraints on these are in vain, and attempts to diminish the number of the temptations that call them forth to action, to no purpose. Upon this principle, we may at once commence French atheists, discard our Clergy, shut our Churches, and convert the Sabbath, as too many have already done, into a day of business or amusement. But how come the gentlemen in question to dwell so much on the corruption of human nature in this instance, when, it is well known, the doctrine of original depravity forms no article of a modern gentleman's creed; while the innate purity, rectitude and dignity of our nature are so much cried up on other occasions! By what pitiful shifts do some parry off the cogent reasons that enforce the necessity of reform in present circumstances! But these will be found ineffectual as the charge of pop-guns: for truth and justice are powerful and will prevail.

If there is any reality in the grounds of complaint specified, or any weight in the reasoning employed, the candid Reader will allow that we need the reformation in question;---that the best Christians, and the most loyal subjects may consistently sue for it by every legal and constitutional mean in their power;---that the present is the best time to grant it, would we prevent a convulsion in the state; and profit by the fate of others;---and that the corruption of morals which, alas! appears too flagrant every where, so far from invalidating the plea on the side of the people, or justifying a continued rejection of it in their rulers, does but more powerfully enforce the necessity of speedy reform in the matters in question. This will farther appear from some following pieces, which this was intended to introduce.

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

Friends to the Liberty of the Press.

SECOND MEETING.

*Crown and Anchor Tavern, January 19, 1793.*Honourable THOMAS ERSKINE, M. P. in the
CHAIR.

MR. ERSKINE said, that though he did not care for calumny and misrepresentation, as far as it affected himself personally, which he took it for granted was the case with every Gentleman present; yet, as far as it affected the great object for which they were assembled, it was of the greatest importance to the Public: that he should, therefore, to render misrepresentation utterly impossible, read what he had to say from a paper, which he had written. He then read as follows:

“ The peculiar excellence of the English Constitution, on which indeed the value of every Government may be summed up, is, that it creates an equal rule of action for the whole Nation, and an impartial administration of justice under it.

“ From these master principles results that happy, unsuspecting, and unsuspected freedom, which for ages has distinguished Society in England, and which has united Englishmen in an enthusiasm for their Country, and a reverence for their Laws.

“ To maintain this fearless tranquillity of human life, the prime blessing of Social Union, the power of accusation was not given to *uninjured* individuals, much less to *voluntary, undefined, unauthorized* Associations of Men, acting without responsibility, and open to *irregular* and private motives of action; but was conferred upon the Supreme Executive Magistrate,

grate, as more likely to look down upon the Mass of the Community with an unimpassioned eye; and even that wisely placed trust, guarded and bridled by the personal responsibility of those Officers by which the Crown is obliged to exercise its authority, and in the higher order of crimes, (which on principle should extend to all) guarded once again by the office of the Grand Jury, interposed as a shield between the People and the very Laws enacted by themselves.

“ These admirable provisions appear to be founded in a deep acquaintance with the principles of Society, and to be attended with the most important benefits to the Public; because, tempered again, and finally with the Trial by the Country, they enable the English Constitution to ratify the existence of a *strong, hereditary, executive* Government, consistently with the security of popular freedom.

“ By this arrangement of the Royal Prerogative of Accusation, so restrained and mitigated in its course, the Crown becomes an object of wholesome, but not dangerous jealousy; which, while it prevents it from overstepping its Constitutional limits, endears the People to one another, from a sense of the necessity of union amongst themselves, for the preservation of their privileges against a power dangerous to remove, but equally dangerous to exist, unobserved and unbalanced.

“ Under this system, making allowance for the vices and errors inseparable from humanity, State accusations, *in modern times*, though sometimes erroneous, have not often been rash or malevolent, and the Criminal under the weight of the firm hand of Justice, has been supported by the indulgent fraternal Tribunal of his Country.

“ But under the circumstances which assemble us together, all these provisions appear to be endangered.

“ A sudden alarm has been spread through the Kingdom by the Ministers of the Crown, of imminent

ment danger to the Constitution, and to all Order and Government. The Nation has been represented to be fermenting into Sedition and Insurrection, through the dangerous Associations and Writings of disaffected and alienated subjects; and under the pressure of this perilous conjuncture the Parliament has been suddenly assembled, and the Militia embodied.

“ The existence or extent of these evils since they have been sanctioned, though not ascertained by the authority of Parliament when assembled, we have not upon the present occasion assembled to debate. But we may, without Sedition, congratulate our Fellow-subjects, that our Ministers had the vigilance to detect those *numerous and bloody* Insurrections, which otherwise might have *secreted themselves* and passed *unknown and undiscovered*; and that without the punishment of a single individual, for any Overt Act of Treason, the People have recovered all that tranquillity and respect for the Laws which they appeared to us to have equally possessed at the time when the alarm burst forth.

“ That large classes of the Community should nevertheless give faith to the assertions and acts of a *responsible* Government, is neither to be wondered at nor disapproved. When the English Constitution is authoritatively represented to be in danger, we rejoice in the enthusiasm of Englishmen to support it. When that danger is further represented to have been caused or increased by the circulation of treasonable and seditious Writings, we acknowledge that it is the duty of every good Citizen in his proper sphere, and by proper Means to discountenance them, and nothing is further from the intention of this Meeting than to hold up to public disapprobation such individuals, as from honest motives, have joined Associations, even though they may in their zeal have shot beyond that line of exertion which we (mistakenly, perhaps, but conscientiously) conceive to be the safe limitation

Limitation of assistance to Executive Government by Private Men.

" We assemble neither to reprehend, nor to dictate to others, but from a principle of public duty to enter our solemn protest against the propriety or justice of those Associations, which by the contagion of example are spreading fast over England, supported by the Subscriptions of opulent men, for the avowed object of *suppressing and prosecuting* Writings: more especially when accompanied with rewards to Informers; *and above all*, when these rewards are extended (of which there are instances), to question and to punish opinions delivered even in the private intercourses of domestic life; unmixed with any act or manifested intention against the authority of the Laws.

" We refrained at our former Meeting from pronouncing these proceedings, to be illegal and punishable, because we must receive the rule from our Statutes and Precedents of Law, which are silent on the subject; but we consider them to be doubtful in law, and unconstitutional in principle from the whole Theory, and all the analogies of English Justice.

" In the first place, we object to them as wholly unnecessary; and we give this objection precedence, because there ought to be a visible necessity or expediency to vindicate every innovation in the mode of administering the Laws. Supposing then the conjuncture to be what it is by authority represented, the Crown is possessed of the most ample powers for the administration of speedy and universal Justice.

" If the ordinary Sittings of the Courts are found at any time to be insufficient for the accomplishment of their jurisdictions, or if even a salutary terror is to be inspired for the general security, the King may appoint Special Commissions for the Trial of Offenders.

" If the Revenue devoted to the ordinary purposes of Criminal Justice should be found insufficient for an unusual Expenditure, Parliament is ever at hand to supply the means; and no Parliament can be supposed to refuse, or the People be suspected to murmur at so necessary an expence.

" If

" If information also became necessary for the discovery and conviction of offenders, the Crown may at any time, by its authority, set even Informers in motion.

" But under all this awful process, Public Freedom would still be secured, while the Public Safety was maintained. The Crown still acting by its Officers, would continue to be responsible for the exercise of its authority; and the Community still bound together by a common interest, and cemented by the undisturbed affections and confidences of private life, would be sound and pure for the administration of Justice.

" This we maintain and publish to be the Genius of the British Constitution, as it regards the Criminal Law.

" But when without any State necessity, or requisition from the Crown, or Parliament of the Kingdom, bodies of men voluntarily intrude themselves into a sort of partnership of authority with the Executive Power; and when, from the universal and admitted interest of the whole Nation, in the object or *pretexts* of such Associations, the People (if they continue to spread as they have done) may be said to be in a manner represented by them, where is the accused to find justice amongst his Peers, when arraigned by such combinations? Where is the boasted Trial by the Country, if the Country is thus to become Informer and Accuser?

" Where is the cautious distrust of accusation, if the Grand Jury may themselves (or some of them) have informed against the object of it, brought in the very Bill which they are to find, and subscribed for the prosecution of it?

" Where in the end is the mild, complacent, relenting countenance of the Jury for Trial—that last consolation which the humanity of England never denied, even to men taken in arms against her Laws, if the Pannel is to come reeking from the Vestry-rooms, where they have been listening to harangues concerning the absolute necessity of extinguishing the very crimes and the criminals, which they are to decide upon in judgement, and to condemn by their verdicts?

" But if these proceedings must thus evidently taint the administration of Justice, even in the Superior Courts,

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where the Judges, from their independence, their superior learning, and their further removal from common life, may be argued to be likely to assist Juries in the due discharge of their office—what must be the condition of the Courts of Quarter Sessions, whose Jurisdictions over these offences are co-ordinate—where the Judges are the very Gentlemen who lead those Associations in every county and city in the kingdom, and where the jurors are either tenants and dependents, or their neighbours in the country, justly looking up to them with confidence and affection, as their friends and protectors in the direction of their affairs? Is this a trial by an English Court and Jury? It would be infinitely more manly, and less injurious to the accused, to condemn him at once without a hearing, than to *mock* him with the empty forms of the British Constitution, when the substance and effect of it are destroyed.

“ By these observations we mean no disrespect to the Magistracies of our Country. But the best men may inadvertently place themselves in situations absolutely incompatible with their duties. Our natures are Human, and we err when we consider them as Divine.

“ These incongruities arising from this rage of popular accusation, or even of declared popular support to accusations proceeding from the Crown, are not our original observations. We are led to them by the analogies and institutions of the law itself.

“ On this principle, Criminals impeached, not by the People heated with a sense of individual danger, and personally mixing themselves with the charge and the evidence, but, impeached by the House of Commons representing them, are tried, from the necessity of the case, by the Lords, and not by the Country. This anomaly of Justice arose from the humanity and wisdom of our ancestors. They thought, that when the complaint proceeded not from the Crown, whose acts the people are accustomed

trained to watch with jealousy, but from the popular branch of the Government, which they lean towards with favour, it was more substantial justice to the meanest man in *England*, to send him for trial before the Lords, though connected with him by no common interest; but, on the contrary, divided by a separate one, than to trust him to a Jury of his Equals; when the people from which it must be taken was even in *theory* connected with the prosecution, though totally unacquainted, in fact, with its cause, or with its object.

“ We appeal with confidence to the reason of the Public, whether these principles do not apply, by the closest analogy to the proceedings which we assemble to disapprove. For as criminal jurisdictions are local, the offence must be tried in the county, and frequently in the very town where it is charged to be committed; and thus the accused must not only stand before a Court infected by a *general prejudice*, but in a manner disqualified by a *pointed and particular passion and interest*.

“ We have further to remark, that these objections to popular associations or the prosecution of crimes, apply with double force when directed against the Press, than against any other objects of criminal justice which can be described or imagined.

“ Associations to prosecute offences against the Game Laws, or frauds against tradesmen (which we select as familiar instances) though we do not vindicate them, nevertheless distinctly describe their objects, and in suppressing illegal conduct, have no immediate tendency to deter from the exercise of rights which are legal, and in which the Public have a deep and important interest.

“ No unqualified person can shoot or sell a hare, or a partridge, as long as a monopoly in game is suffered to continue, without knowing that he transgresses the Law; and there can be no difference of judgment upon the existence, extent, or consequence of

the offence. The trial is of a mere fact. By such Associations, therefore, the Public cannot be stated to suffer further than it always suffers by an oppressive system of Penal Law, and by every departure from the due course of administering it.

“ In the same manner, when a Swindler obtains goods on false pretences, he cannot have done so from error, the act is decisive of the intention; the Law defines the crime with positive precision; and the trial is in this case therefore only the investigation of a fact; and in holding out errors to Swindlers, honest men are in no danger, nor does the Public suffer further than we have above adverted to.

“ These Associations besides, from their very natures, cannot be so universal, as to disqualify the country at large by prejudice or interest from the Office of Trial. They are bottomed besides, particularly the last (which is a most material distinction) upon crimes, the perpetration of which are injurious to individuals *as such*, and which each individual in his own personal right might legally prosecute. Whereas we assemble to object to the popular prosecution of those *public* offences, which the Crown, if they exist, is bound in duty to prosecute by the Attorney-General, where no individual can count upon a personal injury; and where the personal interest of the subject is only as a Member of that Public, which is committed to the care of the Executive Authority of the Country.

“ The Press, therefore, as it is to be affected by Associations of individuals to fetter its general freedom, *wholly unconnected with any attack upon private character*, is a very different consideration; for if the nation is to be combined to suppress writings, without further describing what those writings are, than by the general denomination—*seditions*; and if the exertions of these combinations are not even to be confined to suppress and punish the circulation of books, *already condemned by the judgements of Courts*, but

but are to extend to whatever does not happen to fall in with their private judgments:---if every writing is to be prosecuted which they may not have the sense to understand, or the virtue to practise:---if no man is to write but upon their principles, nor can read with safety except what they have written, lest he should accidentally talk of what he has read; ---no man will venture either to write or to speak upon the topics of Government or its Administration ---a freedom which has ever been acknowledged by our greatest statesmen and lawyers to be the principal safeguard of that Constitution, which liberty of thought originally created, and which a FREE PRESS for its circulation gradually brought to maturity.

“ We *will* therefore *maintain* and *assert* by all legal means this sacred and essential privilege, the Parent and Guardian of every other. We *will maintain* and *assert* the right of instructing our fellow-subjects by every sincere and conscientious communication which may promote the public happiness; and while we render obedience to Government and to Law, we *will* remember at the same time, that as they exist by the People’s consent, and for the People’s benefit, they have a right to examine their principles, to watch over their due execution, and to preserve the beautiful structure of their Constitution, by pointing out as they arise, those defects and corruptions which the hand of Time never fails to spread over the wisest of human institutions.

“ If in the legal and peaceable assertion of this Freedom we shall be calumniated and persecuted, we must be contented to suffer in the cause of Freedom, as our fathers before us have suffered; but we will, like our fathers, also persevere until we prevail.

“ Let us, however, recollect with satisfaction, that the Law as it stands at this very moment (thanks to our illustrious patriot, Mr. Fox) is amply sufficient for the protection of the Press, if the Country will be but true to itself. The extent of the genuine Liber-

ty of the Prefs on *general* subjects, and the boundaries which separate them from licentiousness, the English Law has wisely not attempted to define; they are, indeed, in their nature undefinable; and it is the office of the Jury alone, taken from the County in each particular instance, to ascertain them, and the trust of the Crown, where no individual is slandered, to select the instances for trial by its Ministers, responsible to Parliament.

"This system appears to us amply to secure the government, while it equally protects the Subject; but if this selection is to be transferred to self-constituted Assemblies of men, agitated by a zeal, however honest, the Prefs must be broken up, and individuals must purchase their safety by ignorance and silence.

In such a state, we admit that the other Liberties, which we enjoy under the Laws, might nevertheless continue as long as Government might happen to be justly administered; but should corruption or ambition ever direct their efforts against them, the Nation would be surprized and enslaved---surprized by the loss of their wakeful Sentinels, whom they had shot for only being at their posts, and enslaved from the loss of their armour, which their adversary, under the pretence of a Treaty, had cajoled them to throw away.

"But these evils become not only greater, but absolutely intolerable, when extended to the stimulation of Spies to stab domestic peace, to watch for the innocent in the hours devoted to convivial happiness, and to disturb the sweet repose of private life upon the bosom of friendship and truth.

"It is justly observed by the celebrated Judge Foster, that words are transitory and fleeting, easily forgotten, and subject to mistaken interpretations: their very existence at all, and their criminality, as depending upon context, or sequel, or occasion---*all* is to rest on the oaths of hired Informers. Is this in the end

end of the 18th century to be the condition of our cheerful country? Are these to be our chains? And are we, after we have broken them on the heads of tyrants in former ages, to sit down to forge them again for ourselves, and to fasten them on one another?

“ Our last, and not the least objection to popular accusation, is the love we bear to the Government of *England*, and our wish that its functions may be perpetual: it being our opinion, as expressed in our Seventh Resolution, at our former Meeting.

“ *That a system of Jealousy and arbitrary coercion of the People has been at all times dangerous to the stability of the English Government.*

“ For the truth of which we appeal to Human Nature in General, to the characteristic of Englishmen in particular, and to the history of the Country.

“ In the career of such a system of combination, we foresee nothing but oppression, and when its force is extinguished, nothing but discontent, disobedience, and misrule.

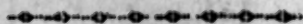
“ If Government permits or countenances this distribution of its Executive Powers, how is it to resume them should opinions change, and run the other way? From the artifices and ambition of designing men, the best Governments may, for a season, be unpopular, as we know from experience, that the very worst may triumph for a while by imposture. Should such a change of opinion arrive, as in the nature of things it must, the Administration of Government and Justice will be distracted and weakened. It will be in vain to inculcate that subjects may persecute one another by combination, but that they must not combine for their common defence. And as in this unnatural tide of flood, no man may expect to be acquitted, however he may love his Country; so in the ebb of the same tide, equally unnatural, it may be difficult to bring to conviction, even those who may be plotting its destruction. A-
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gainst both these departures, from the even and usual course of justice, and all their consequences, we equally, and with an *impartial* spirit protest.

“ When we consider the great proportion of the Community, that has already *hastily* sanctioned the proceedings which we dissent from, the great Authority that countenances them, the powerful influence which supports them, and the mighty revenue raised upon the people, which through various channels rewards many of those who lead the rest, the difficulties which this Address has to encounter; and judging of man from his nature and his history, we expect no *immediate* success from our interposition. But we believe that the season of reflection is not far distant, when this humble effort for the Public will be remembered, and its authors be vindicated by the People of Great Britain.”

Having concluded amidst the plaudits and most unanimous approbation of his Auditors.

Mr. Sheridan, after doing justice to the motives, to the zeal, and to the abilities of Mr. Erskine, and having stated the propriety of the Meeting's holding forth at once to the Public a pledge of the principles which influenced them, and upon which they meant to act, moved, “ That the paper then read be adopted as the DECLARATION of the FRIENDS TO THE FREEDOM OF THE PRESS;” which Motion was immediately carried without a dissenting voice; and in a short time the Declaration received above Five Hundred most respectable Signatures.



EXTRACTS from MR. CHRISTIE

ON THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

“ IN answer to those who censured Dr Price's Discourse on the Love of our Country, and indeed *political*

tical sermons of every kind, Mr C. observes;—The Bible contains a number of *political texts*, and *political narrations*, which are of use for doctrine, &c. Hence it is the duty of a clergyman sometimes to *preach political sermons*. He is bound to teach the people their duties, one of which is, *obedience to lawful government*. This is politics. He is also bound to instruct the people in the measure and limits of obedience to their superiors, for tho' they owe a duty to their *King*, they owe a higher one to their God; and where their service interfere, he is bound to forewarn them, that they ought to obey God rather than man. Moreover, he is to remind Governors of their duties to the people. And finally, in all cases where the political institutions of a nation are immediately connected with the interests of truth, or the welfare of piety, they properly come under a clergyman's consideration in the pulpit. Hence he acts quite in character when he preaches against the *Test Act*, or any other species of persecution or grievance for consciences sake.

“ Civil Governors abuse their power, when they do not grant equal encouragement and equal protection to every good citizen. By a *partial* distribution of the revenues of the State to promote one set of religious doctrines, or the observance of a certain mode of religious worship, and by annexing inconveniences and embarrassments to the profession of others, they throw temptations in the way of citizens to act contrary to their conscience from worldly views, and to do all in their power to stop the progress of truth, by not leaving it to its own native weight and influence. Truth stands in no need of such props, for they may produce hypocrisy, but not candid conviction; and to lend such aid to error is pernicious, because it is giving it an undue advantage over truth, and bribing men to embrace it. To tempt men to embrace true Religion by annexing civil advantages exclusively to the profession of it, is to offer both it and its Author

a gross insult, as if he did not propose motives sufficient to operate on the human heart, and called in the aid of the civil powers to supply this deficiency. This is indeed the best way to recommend a corrupt system, but truth disdains such carnal expedients, and never takes shelter under such mean subterfuges.

“Religious tests are to be reprobated; because they render the duty to governors very difficult, if not impossible to the people: for, whenever a class of men are marked out in an odious way; then they are deprived of the rights possessed by the rest of their fellow citizens, on account of their religion, they immediately become more or less *disaffected* to the state; their sense of obligation to respect and obey their governors is weakened. Nor can it be otherwise; for who can cordially esteem a government that oppresses or stigmatizes him? who can feel the justice of his suffering when he is made to suffer for that which is his highest duty, viz. to adhere to the dictates of his conscience! These religious tests are as *impolitic*, as they are unjust: they do not keep bad men out of offices, for such do not scruple to swallow them; but they keep honest and conscientious men out of stations, where they would be useful and valuable to the Community.”

From the same author on our laws.

“Our laws are not known, because not promulgated; yet the maxim of the Lawyer stands in full force.

“*Ignorantia legis neminem excusat*,”—*ignorance of the law excuses none.* This is as bad as the brick without straw of the Israelites. The study of our laws is not the contemplation of *wisdom*, but of *authority and precedent*. It does not tend to enlarge the mind, but to narrow it. It does not teach to reason, but to quibble.

“If our Laws require a reform, the Constitution of our Courts, and the practice of the Law in them stand in no less need of one. Every species of corruption

fusion, delay, uncertainty, absurdity and enormous expence, is to be found in our miserable organization, and form of process. To the poor man justice is in many cases inaccessible; and the rich man usually pays more than the amount of the object disputed, in obtaining it. Hence it is an observation, trite even to a proverb in England, that of all modes of ruining one's self, the most infallible is that of going to law!

"I should be sorry if from these observations I should be represented as an enemy to Lawyers. I am an enemy neither to them, nor to their profession, but to the abuses of it. But if the Law, instead of appealing to reason, shall be found to appeal to nothing but fluctuating authority, and that too deduced from unenlightened times; if our Canons, instead of being the selected wisdom of ages, shall become nothing else but a collected mass of regulations, assembled together as chance, or caprice, or old absurd customs directed; if these exceed all the powers of human memory to remember; if the forms of procedure in courts become intricate, vexatious, and tedious, so that no man can obtain justice without enormous expence, trouble and loss of time, and any man who is rich and mischievous enough, may vex, torment and oppress his neighbour almost to any degree: In such a state of things, what must be the consequence? Most assuredly that the Law, as well as its professors, will lose the confidence of mankind, and the honour naturally belonging to them—that instead of a public good, they will be considered as a public nuisance—that the name of Lawyer, in place of being regarded as a respectable and sacred name, as that of the peace-maker, will be associated with disagreeable ideas, and convey to men's minds the idea of an Oppressor, a Cheat, a Harpy, who preys on their vitals, and lives by the miseries of mankind."

ADDRESS

ADDRESS

OF THE

Society of United Irishmen, of Dublin,

TO THE IRISH NATION.

IT is our right and our duty, at this time and at all times, to communicate our opinion to the public, whatever may be its success; and under the protection of a free press, itself protected by a jury, judges of law as well as fact, we will never be afraid to speak freely what we freely think, appealing for the purity of our intentions to God, and as far as these intentions are manifested by word, writing, or action, appealing to the justice of our cause, and the judgment of our country.

On the 9th of November, 1791, was this society founded. We and our beloved brethren of Belfast first began that civic union, which, if a nation be a society united for mutual advantage, has made Ireland a nation; and at a time when all wished, many willed, but few spoke, and fewer acted, we, Catholics and Protestants, joined our hands and our hearts together; sunk every distinctive appellation in the name of *Irishman*; and in the presence of God, devoted ourselves to universal enfranchisement, and a real representation of all the people in parliament. On this rock of right our little ark found a resting-place; gradually, though not slowly, throughout the country, other stations of safety appeared, and what before was agitated sea, became firm and fertile land. From that time have the body and spirit of our societies increased, until selfish corporations, sunk in conscious insignificance, have given way to a grand incorporation of the Irish people.

We

We have, in our *Digest of the penal laws*, addressed ourselves successfully, to the good sense, humanity and generous indignation of all Ireland, convincing public reason, alarming public conscience, and holding up this collection of bloody fragments as a terrible memorial of government without justice, and legality without constitution. It has been our rule and our practice never to enter into compromise or composition with a noxious principle, and we have therefore set our face, and lifted our voice, against this persecuting and pusillanimous code, as against the murderer of our brother, eager to erase the whole of it from the statute-book as it erased our countrymen from the state, and wishing to proscribe such an incongruous and monstrous conjunction of terms as *Penal Law*, not only from a digest of the laws, but from the dictionary of the language.

It has appeared our duty, in times such as these, when the head is nothing without the heart, and with men such as we oppose, not only to write and speak, but to act and suffer; to reckon nothing hazardous, provided it was necessary; to come forward with the intrepidity which a good cause inspires, and a backward people required; by going far ourselves to make others follow faster, though, all the time conjuring us to retreat; in short, to make the retrograde stationary, and the stationary progressive; to quicken the dead, and add a soul to the living.

Knowing that what the tongue is to the man, the press is to the people, though nearly blasted in our cradle by the sorcery of solicitors of law, and general attorneys, we have persisted with courageous perseverance, to rally around this forlorn hope of freedom, and to maintain this citadel of the Constitution, at the risque of personal security, property, and all that was dear to us. They have come to us with a writ and a warrant, and an *ex officio* information, but we have come to them in the name of the genius of the British Constitution and the Majesty of the

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People

People of Ireland. Is sedition against the officers of administration, to exercise the criminal jurisdiction of the country, and is sedition against the people, to walk by with arrogant impunity?

We have defended the violated liberty of the subject against the undefined and voracious privilege of the House of Commons, treating with merited scorn the insolent menaces of men inflated with office, and not only have we maintained the rights of the people at the bar of this branch of the legislature, but we have, at the bench of judicature, vindicated the right of the nation, its real independence and immutability; demonstrating that general inviolability was made transmissible to one or many deputies, to the utter extinction of responsibility, the evasion of criminality; and that the executive power of imperial and independent Ireland, was merely a jingling appendage to the great seal of Great Britain. Not a man so low, that, if oppressed by an assumption of power, civil or military, has not met with our counsel, our purse, and our protection: not a man so high, that if acting contrary to popular right or public independence, we have not denounced at the judgment's seat of justice, and at the equitable tribunal of public opinion.

We have encountered much calumny. We have, among a thousand contradictory epithets, been called Republicans and Levellers; as if, by artfully making the terms appear synonymous, their nature could be made the same; as if a Republican were a Leveller, or a Leveller a Republican; as if the only Leveller was not the Despot who crushes with an iron sceptre every rank and degree of society into one; as if republican or democratic energy was not, as well as aristocratical privilege, or regal prerogative, sanctioned by the fundamental principles of the Constitution, by all those memorable precepts which form its first features, and by which the just and virtuous struggles of our ancestors, recognized by successive

cessive generations, point out to their posterity when they ought to interpose, and how long they ought to suffer. In his words, whose name rests unknown, but whose fame is immortal*, we desire "that the Constitution may preserve its monarchical form, "but we would have the manners of the people "purely republican." Are you not sensible that this cry of republicanism, as the clamour against the Catholic Delegation, has been raised and prolonged by the mischievous malignity of the lowest gossips of government, merely to drown the general voice for Reform, like the state-manceuvre which ordered a flourish of trumpets and alarm of drums, at the side of suffering Patriots†, when they wished to address themselves to the reason and justice of the people.—But we will speak, and you will hear.—Yes, countrymen, we do desire that extended liberty, which may allow you, as citizens, to do what you will, provided you do not injure another; or rather, to do all the good you can to others, without doing injustice to yourselves. Yes, countrymen, we do wish for an equality of rights which is constitutional, not an equality of property which is impossible. Yes, countrymen, we do long for another equality, and we hope yet to see it realized—an equality consisting in the power of every father of a family to acquire, by labour either of mind or body, something beyond a mere subsistence—some little capital to prove, in case of sickness, old age, or misfortune, a safeguard for his body and for his soul; a hallowed hoard that may lift him above the hard necessity which struggles between conscience and corruption; that may keep his heart whole, and his spirit erect, while his body bends beneath its burden; make him sling away the wages of venality, and proudly return to an humble home, where a Constitution that looks alike on the palace and the hovel, may stand at his hearth a tutelar Divinity,

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* Junius.

† Sir Henry Vane, and Algernon Sydney.

vinty, and spread the Egis of equal law to guard him from the revenge of those who offered the bribe, and offered it in vain. Yes, Irishmen, we do proclaim it our dearest wish, to see a more equal distribution of the benefits and blessings of life thro' the lowest classes of the community, the stamina of society; and we assert it as our firm belief, that an equal distribution of the elective franchise must contribute to this end: for national happiness depends upon employment, which must itself spring from industry; and that again depends on liberty, security of person and property, equal law, speedy and impartial justice; and, in short, on that tenure in the state, which may raise the community in relative value as in self-estimation; make the agency of the People instrumental to a good Government, and the re-agency of good Government meliorate the morals and manners of the People: bind together the distinct, and hitherto contending classes of society, by the cement of reciprocity and the interchange of obligations, and make the higher ranks—ballustrades that adorn the arch—feel their dependance on the People, who are the piles that support it. On the whole, we are so far Republicans, as to desire a National House of Commons, in its origin, its form, its features, and its spirit; reverencing the People—not conspiring, with every other rank, against them, against their privileges, their pleasures, their homely happiness, their fireside enjoyment; but rather cherishing the elective franchise the poor man's ewe lamb, and stigmatizing the landlord who would despoil him of it, as a Traitor to the Constitution; a Robber of National Right, and a Murderer of Public Happiness!

We have addressed the Friends of the People in England, and have received their concurrence, their thanks, and their gratulation.—We have addressed the Volunteers—Deliverers of this injured Island! Have we done wrong? If we have, tear your colours from the staff—reverse your arms—muffle your drums

drums---beat a funeral-march for Ireland---and then abandon the Corpse to Fencibles, to Militia, to Invalids, and dismounted Dragoons.---If we have not done wrong---and we swear by the Revolution of 82 that we have not---go on, with the zeal of enterprising virtue and a sense of your own importance, to exercise that right of self-defence which belongs to the Nation, and to infuse constitutional energy into the public will, for the public good.

We now address Ireland. We address you as a moral person, having a conscience, a will and an understanding---bound not only to preserve, but to perfect your nature---the nations around you to witness your conduct, and a God above you to reward your virtues, or to punish your crimes. We speak to you as Man to Man---reading your countenance---remark- ing the various passions that now shift across it, and striving to recollect a character long obliterated by foreign influence, or, after short and fierce develop- ments, becoming the same dull blank as before. Se- vered as you have always been into counteracting in- terests---an English interest, an Aristocratic interest, a Protestant interest, and a Catholic interest---all contradistinguished from common weal; and all, like the four elements, before Wisdom moved on the surface of the deep, exerting their respective influen- ces to retain a chaos, rather than create a Constituti- on. Actuated, as you have most generally been, by circumstances merely *external*---compressed at one time into fortuitous union by the iron circle of Bri- tish domination---at another time, by the panic of in- vasion and fear of famine, when a bankrupt merchan- try and embarrassed gentry, were starved into the com- mon cause of a beggared People, whom Government had first pillaged, and then abandoned;---at the pre- sent time, perhaps impelled chiefly by the extraordi- nary events that have taken place on the Continent, it is not surprising that your real character is still, in a great measure, unknown to Europe, to Britain, and

even to yourself. It is not surprising, that recollecting the past, we should be anxious about the future;—that we will not entirely confide in the fugitive splendour of the moment, the passing spirit of the people, or even the miraculous conversion of Parliament;—never, never satisfied, or secure, until we see a real Representation of that People in that Parliament;—until we can see Britain and Ireland connected by constitution, not by corruption—by equal, not by strong government;—until we see Public Opinion, or the Will of the Nation—not as now, acting with rude and intermittent shocks—but the settled and central balance of the political order, around which, without apparent motion in itself, the different branches in the Legislature may revolve, with the silence and regularity of the planetary system.

We address your understanding—the common sense of the common weal, and we ask you, Is it not a TRUTH, that where the People do not participate in the Legislature, by a delegation of Representatives, freely, fairly, and frequently elected, there can be no Public Liberty? Is it not the FACT, that in this country there is no Representative Legislature; because the People are not represented in the Legislature, and have no partnership in the Constitution? If it be the principle of the Constitution, that it is the right of every commoner in this realm to have a vote in the election of his Representative; and that without such vote, no man can be actually represented, it is our wish, in that case, to renovate that Constitution, and to revive its suspended animation, by giving free motion and full play to its vital principle. If, on the other hand, the Constitution does *not* fully provide for an impartial and adequate Representation of all the People; if it be more exclusive than inclusive in its nature; if it be a monopoly, a privilege, or a prerogative; in that case, it is our desire to *alter* it; for what is the Constitution to us, if we are nothing to the Constitution? Is the Constitution made
for

for you, or you for it? If the People do not constitute a-part of it, what is it to them more than the ghost of Alfred; and what are principles without practice which they hear and read, to practice without principles which they see and feel?

The people of Ireland want political power;—taxation without consent, and legislation without representation, is not a partial grievance, or a Catholic grievance, but the grievance of the nation. The elective franchise is withheld from all, while all want a constituency in the constitution. The disfranchised, and the unfranchised, the unrepresented, and the misrepresented, the Catholic and Presbyterian, are equally under the law, and out of the Constitution; the Protestant who is supposed to have it, and the Catholic who wishes to have it, are equally interested in having it free; for the truth is, that the whole community wants that emancipation which is necessary to a free government; we can give no truer definition of slavery, than that state in which men are governed without their consent, and no better description of freedom, than that not only those who make the law, should be bound by the law, but those who are bound by the law should have a share in the making it.

All Ireland knows and feels that the people are ousted from their own constitution, and that in a Government where they have no participation, the King must become a Despot, and the Nation a Slave. Public reason is convinced, and we assert with the confidence of conviction, that there are not one hundred in this island, inimical to a renovation of the genuine Constitution, who are not, at the same time, personally interested in the continuance of its corruptions and the prolongation of its abuses. The time is come when the Nation must speak for the Nation, and the long expected hour of redemption approaches, perhaps providentially protracted, until the universal voice could be heard, and the universal

WILL

WILL declared. The nation is ONE: one in body, one in soul, an union of colours in a single ray of truth, and the same inextinguished principle which has accomplished many bloodless revolutions in our history; the peaceful revolution of 1779, which gained a Free Trade, the peaceful revolution of 1782, which gained an independence of right to Ireland, will consummate her imperfect freedom, with equal safety, honour and tranquillity, by the same means, a constitutional interposition of the people, justifiable by law, reason, right and expediency. The honour of Ireland, her dearest interests, present and future, the interest of her land-holders, and of her merchants, her commercial credit, her staple manufacture, are all involved in the present crisis, and urgently call upon you to declare in Convention, your wish, your will, and your determination, that the House of Commons may be restored to that true representative character which would regain national confidence, most effectually suppress all particular associations, give vigour to government, and rest to the perturbed spirit of the people.

O, Ireland! Ireland! country to which we have clung in all our misfortunes, personal, religious, political; for whose freedom and happiness we are here solemnly united; for whom, as a society we live; and for whom, as men, if hard necessity commands it, we are ready to die; let us conjure you not to abuse the present precious moment, by a self-extinguishment, by a credulous committal of your judgement and senses to the direction of others, by an idle and idiot gaze on what may be going on in parliament. In receiving good offices from all, distinguish between sound Hibernicism and that windy Patriotism which is now puffing and blowing in the race of popularity. Trust as little to your friends as to your enemies, in a matter where you can act only by yourselves. The will of the nation must be declared before any reform ought to take place. It is not therefore any
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chefs however numerous, any society however respectable, any subaltern assembly, that have either right or competency to express that authoritative will. Nothing less than the people can speak for the people.— This competency resides not in a few freeholders shivering in the corner of a county hall, but only in the whole community represented in each county, (as at present in Antrim,) by parochial delegation, and then *from* each county by baronial delegation, to provincial conventions, the union of which must form the awful will of the people of Ireland †. Let
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† The Bill lately brought into the Irish Parliament, and supported by so great a majority, may have in view the suppression of what is proposed above. That laws already exist sufficient to check whatever may tend to menace the internal peace and safety of the country, and that such a bill is therefore not only quite unnecessary, but even of a most dangerous tendency, appears clearly from the protest entered against it by three noble Peers in the Irish House of Lords. If discontents and tumults of a serious nature exist in that kingdom, the best way to remove and suppress them, is timely to meet the wishes of the people, so far as founded in reason and equity; and not to adopt strong and unconstitutional measures, on the spur of the moment, which tend to irritate and increase rather than extinguish them. The great body of the people are best drawn and kept to their duty by cords of love and the bonds of men; whereas the violent exertions of mere authority, are like a cord drawn beyond its proper tone, which is ready to break asunder. When authority is founded in its exercise on the Constitution and equal laws,—is directed to the good and happiness of the Community, and meets the wishes and approbation of the people, from a conviction their real interest is in view, then it forms a threefold cord which cannot be easily broken. Nothing therefore but a rational and timely reform can calm the minds of the people, prevent any bad effects from what is called French principles, secure the peace and prosperity of the Country, and the lustre and stability of the throne, on an honourable and permanent basis; and the present disastrous crusade against France, instead of superceding, as was probably intended, enforces the necessity of such a prudent and salutary measure. The true patriots, the real friends of their country, are those who wish to see its government respectable and energetic, by the due exercise of constitutional rights, and the well-placed confidence of the Public: and not those who would still cherish and defend such measures as threaten our public credit, our commerce, our liberties, and political existence, and of course threaten to sap the pillars of the throne itself, and have indeed already brought our dearest interests into an alarming crisis.

us therefore conclude, by conjuring the county meetings now assembling, to follow the example of Ulster, and by appointing delegates to a convention of their respective provinces, unite their scattered and insulted wills into one momentous mass, which may have authority sufficient to make a declaration of rights in behalf of the nation. Then will the Sovereign graciously interpose on the petition of all the people; the reality as well as form of good government will be established; the justice of the constitution vindicated; and when all this complicated system of national servitude and personal oppression, of perverted principle, and base practice, shall be done away, men shall exceedingly wonder how a Nation that boasted of a free Constitution, and the benignity of its laws, could have suffered itself to be loaded so long with a burthen so grievous and insupportable!

January 5, 1793.

PETITION

Of the Inhabitants of the Town of Nottingham and its Neighbourhood,

TO THE HONOURABLE HOUSE OF COMMONS,

For a Parliamentary Reform.

IN an hour pregnant with alarm to some, with expectation to others, and eventful to all, we approach your honourable house, respectfully to petition for that right, on which the dignity of your body, the happiness of our common country, and perhaps the very being and preservation of our constitution depends.—From various causes the constitution of these Kingdoms has passed into the grossest abuse, so as to insult the common sense of the nation with a name, when

when the reality is gone. This constitution is boasted to consist of three separate independent estates, united only by a co-operation for the common good: and the security for this union is supposed always to rest on the preserving inviolate, the distinguishing character of each of these three estates. Your honourable house is one of them, and it is of its essence that it be the proper representative of the people, that it be elected by them, and them alone, and that the finger of monarchy, or of the nobles, shall not enter into the creation of your honourable body. But this important right of the people is so far usurped and passed from them, that the majority of your house is affirmed to be created by other will than that of the people; and that thus created, it looks up to other favour than that of the people, whereby the confidence of the people in their supposed representative is lessened if not destroyed. From this abuse have been deemed to issue, and must continue to issue, evils of the highest magnitude to this nation. We receive the Constitution of England, as theory presents it to our view, and our petition is that it be restored to this perfect character. In presenting this petition with plainness and firmness, we act with equal wisdom and patriotism, nor fear any calumny which a corrupt interest, acting upon ignorance, may propagate against us. Restoration and no Revolution is our wish, and therefore we ask in full confidence for those rights of the people which the constitution contemplates. Our Petition to your honourable house is comprised in these plain and intelligible objects; that no member of your house be elected by a less number of the people of England, than may be deemed to bear a true proportion to the whole number of adult males in the kingdom; that the duration of parliaments return to its ancient usage, and the present mode of election be abolished, as disgraceful to a civilized country; and we pray your honourable house, to adopt and patronize so
salutary

salutary and healing a reform, and save your country from the wreck of despotism, or the wreck of anarchy. The granting this Petition can lessen no power but that which ought not to exist, while it will assuredly bring back that temperament of power which will quiet every mind, appease every discontent, and establish on firm ground, the character, the peace, and the happiness of these kingdoms.

With this Petition, which we trust will approve itself to your honourable house, and to its concurrence and support, by its plain wisdom, justice, and utility, we think it to be a further duty which we owe ourselves, to assert before your house, and before all England, our claim to the character both of loyalty and of peace: that we are actuated by no secret, no seditious views; that by no other than peaceable and dignified means we will labour to the effecting our virtuous purpose; in fine, we mean not to pull one stone out of the proper building of the English Constitution; but that corner stone which has been dangerously subtracted from it, it is our duty to reclaim, and it will be the glory of your honourable house to restore.

THE QUAKERS' ADDRESS

TO

GEORGE THE THIRD,

King of Great Britain, and the dominions thereto
belonging.

May it please the King:

THY dutiful subjects, the religious society of friends, called Quakers, have felt their minds deeply affected with the calamities attendant on war, and
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the inconsistency thereof with the doctrine of Christ, the Prince of Peace; we apprehend that we cannot at this time, discharge our duty to God, to thee, and to our fellow-subjects, many of whose precious lives may be the victims of the impending hostilities, without beseeching thee to exert thy constitutional power to prevent a measure which may consign to danger and to death thousands of our countrymen; many of whom, alas! may be but too little prepared for that solemn event, even in the more gradual way of natural infirmity.

The protection and support of kingdoms, and of governments, are not in the multitude of an host, but in the Lord Almighty; may, therefore, thy Councils seek his protection, by that righteousness which exalteth a nation, and by continuing to oppose that torrent of vice and immorality which hath so long prevailed, and which thou, O King, as became a Christian Ruler, hast not long since, lamented, censured, and endeavoured to restrain. Permit us, before we close this, our earnest and affectionate address, respectfully to mention the cause of our fellow-creatures, the Africans. We have petitioned the House of Commons on this affecting subject; and, although we desire that the deliberations of Parliament may at all times be free, we are engaged to press it upon thy mind, to consider whether no acceleration of relief can be obtained for that grievously oppressed race, from the influence which a beloved King hath, and ought to have, on the minds of his people. Thus may the blessing of the peace-makers, and of those who love righteousness, be thy happy portion and immortal crown.

Signed on behalf of the Meeting for Sufferings,
held in London, 26th of 1st month, 1793,

By Sixty-two Friends.

THE KING'S ANSWER.

WHATEVER steps I may feel myself bound to take, for the security of my people, I am not the less

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inclined

inclined to judge favourably of the motives, which have led you to present this Address, and you may depend upon the continuance of my protection.

A WORD IN SEASON.

It is not a matter of indifference, that the minds of the people be enlightened.
MONTESQUIEU.

DEFFECTS in the laws or administration of a state never fail to influence the morals of the People, in proportion to their nature, duration, and magnitude. Laws and institutions naturally assimilate their dispositions and manners to their own characteristic genius, as the history of all ages and nations can sufficiently attest. Faults in the Politics of a country will occasion faults in its Ethics, and be occasioned by them in turn; for the manners of a people derive form and spirit from their institutes, corresponding to their nature, and these again produce a similar change on their manners. Whatever is inimical to the secure possession of civil and political liberty, must also be inimical to moral virtue and true religion; according to that expressive axiom of the English poet, *Men shall, with freedom lost, all virtue lose, and fear of God.* Hence a Christian is much more concerned in public measures than some are willing to admit, and stands fully justified in exerting himself, on constitutional ground, to promote the reform of existing abuses, or timely guard against their consequences.

Can any lover of his Country and of his fellow-men remain silent, or indifferent, while he sees measures adopting, which the most competent and unbiassed judges declare to be contrary to the fundamental laws of the state, and destructive to the liberties of a free people? In the crisis of danger every man is a soldier. He that spies, or thinks he spies, an enemy approaching, and neglects, whether through fear, false delicacy, or favour, to give timely alarm, is a traitor to himself, and to his country,
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and deserves to be held in execration. A prudent man, said the wise king or Israel, hath his eyes in his forehead, foreseeth the evil even at a distance, and warns his neighbour, while he hides himself, or provides for his own safety. It is indeed possible, that such as see not with his eyes may tax his admonitions and remonstrances, as untimely and officious; yet come to learn, perhaps when too late, that they were both seasonable and pertinent.

That a standing army is dangerous to the liberties of a free nation, as well as very burdensome to the People, appears from universal experience, and the strenuous exertions of our ancestors to oppose such a measure. In Britain, it is moreover *unconstitutional*, according to the judgment of the best civilians; and therefore to be reprobated by all those who are attached to the Constitution of their Country, and dread every innovation that tends to subvert it. The learned Judge Blackstone, whose commentary on our laws and Constitution, is allowed to be of great authority, has the following pointed observations to that purpose. "In a land of liberty it is extremely dangerous to make a distinct order of the profession of arms. In absolute monarchies this is necessary for the safety of the prince, and arises from the main principle of their constitution; which is, that of governing by fear: but in free states, the profession of a soldier, taken singly, and merely as a profession, is justly an object of jealousy. The laws therefore, and constitution of these kingdoms knows no such state as that of a perpetual standing soldier, bred up to no profession but that of war." Com. vol. 1. p. 48. The truth and justice of these remarks admitted, (and sure their author knew what is legal and constitutional under our government,) the question naturally occurs; How comes it to pass, that our soldiers are enlisted for life—that as any die, desert, or are cut off by war, others should be levied to supply their place; whence a large force is kept standing even in times of peace?

When we advert to the condition of common soldiers with us, must we not at once perceive, that it bears an unfriendly aspect on the liberties of the people; whence arises the necessity of the wise provision of our laws and constitution

constitution on that head. Are they not reduced for life, to a state, I had almost said, of the most abject servitude? Are they not obliged, without relief, to yield implicit obedience to the arbitrary mandates of another, at the risk of life should they obey or not; while their judges are not their peers, but their commanders, and they are in effect precluded from the benefit of appeal from their sentence? May not the smallest misdemeanor subject them to a punishment, at once the most painful and degrading; while crimes of the deepest die call not forth even a reproof? If surprised, thro' infirmity or temptation, into a fit of drunkenness, of which their very judges, who award the punishment, too often set them the example, are they not liable to be severely flogged†, like the very worst

† The newspapers informed us, that a poor soldier was lately sentenced by a Court-martial to receive 800 lashes at two different times, and to be then drummed out of the regiment, for uttering something disrespectful of his King, perhaps when overtaken with intoxication. That such freedoms should, one way or other, be checked, be the offender drunk or sober, is readily granted; for it is written, *Thou shalt not speak evil of*, that is calumniate, *the ruler of thy people*: but will any one assert that such offences may be punished in a manner that degrades human nature in the person of a fellow creature? Four drummers were employed to inflict the awarded punishment, which they did so heartily, being so enjoined, that while the poor, unhappy man was receiving the first 400, he fainted twice, and seemed ready to expire. Would it not have been an act of greater mercy to have shot him at once? for, in all probability, he could not have survived, if nature supported the full execution of the sentence; and tho' he did, what a miserable object must he be! We would be sorry to apply to this case that expressive aphorism of scripture, tho' it has indeed brought it to our remembrance; *A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel*.

All men are the creatures of God, and the subjects of his moral government, whence we cannot suppose that he will view with indifference the abuse of the work of his hand, and the objects of his constant care. Against this he hath expressly provided. The Mosaic law enjoins that no delinquent should receive more than forty stripes, for a reason which does honour to our nature, namely, that our Brother might not appear *wile in our eyes*; and so careful were the Jews never to exceed, that they always kept within that number. Can the force of that reason be diminished among Christians, since the Son of God hath deigned to assume our common nature, and to call them *brethren*? Every precept of the Mosaic law,

worst of felons, while rational means are seldom employed to promote their reformation? Is this treating them with that respect which is due to a free born Briton, and professing Christian, be his outward condition in life what it may? Is this calculated to inspire rational courage and true manliness of conduct? Rather, is not their situation, every thing considered, calculated to destroy, or impair the best feelings of the human heart, and to beget

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and

law, which is founded upon a general reason, is still in full force, tho' human legislators may discard it from their code. We may therefore assert it as an absolute truth, that no power or court on earth can possess a right to pronounce and enforce a sentence diametrically opposite to any express law of Heaven; and, of consequence, does not the passing and inflicting such a doom, as in the case here referred to, constitute a crime in the sight of God, greater than the one it was intended to punish?

Had this poor man insulted his Maker, the King of kings, and spoke of him and his government with the utmost disrespect, not a single lash would he receive for such conduct, notwithstanding our flaming zeal against atheism in others. And indeed how could he, seeing his officers, if like the officers of other regiments, perhaps to a man, set him the example? If the great Majesty of the universe be pleased to assume the title, and exercise the authority of King of kings, whence he has a peculiar claim to their allegiance and subjection; how come they and their servants to make so light of the violation of his laws, and of rebellion and treason against him? for these are peccadillos in the account of the statesmen and legislators of the earth, and their creatures: while every instance of disrespect manifested towards their own person or authority, must, without regard to penitence, and promised amendment in future, receive a severe recompence of reward! Would princes, and their ministers have themselves and their authority duly respected, let them recommend and enforce, by example and influence, the fear and service of that Adorable Being, by whom kings reign and rulers decree justice; and then will he support them in the lawful exercise of their just authority, and secure to them all that esteem and influence to which their office entitles them. *They that honour me (says he) I will honour: but they that despise me, shall be lightly esteemed; that is, shall be held in utter contempt.* When such rule without any due regard to his supreme authority, or concern for the advancement of his honour and kingdom—rule without proving a terror to all evil doers without exception, and encouragers of them that do well, howsoever distinguished in other respects, is it not just that he should, as he threatens, *pour contempt upon them, and strike through them in the day of his wrath? With what judgment they judge, they shall be judged: and with what measure they mete, it shall be measured to them again,*

and cherish those of an opposite kind? The very same principle, which hath uniformly led mankind to deem it dangerous to put arms into the hands of slaves, concludes equally against committing the protection of a free people to soldiers enlisted for life, and under the influence and authority of quite different laws and leaders? Can such be rationally supposed to have a tender concern for their peace and welfare*? And does it not merit the attention of rulers and statesmen, that standing armies, even the best disciplined, have sometimes turned their arms against the very Powers that gave them birth and stability, a recent proof of which we have in France? That, with others to be found in the annals of our own history, furnish a monitory lesson to all princes, not to confide in such armies, if their measures are not sanctioned by the approbation of their people: for these, like winter brooks, may fail in time of greatest need.

The respectable law authority already quoted, thus farther expresses himself on this important point; "No-
 " thing ought to be more guarded against in a *free state*,
 " than making the military power, when such a one is
 " necessary to be kept on foot (which I deny that it *ever*
 " is in this country in *time of peace*) a body too distinct
 " from the people. Like ours, it should be wholly com-
 " posed of natural subjects; it *ought only* to be enlisted
 " for a short and limited time. The soldiers should also
 " live *intermixed with the people*; *no separate camp, no bar-*
 " *racks, no inland fortresses* should be allowed"†. Is this
 the

* We have had much puffing in the newspapers of late, about the ease with which the Fencible regiments were raised, and the readiness with which the men offered themselves to the service: But it is an absolute fact, that some of them at least were raised by the most violent and despotic exertions of the old feudal system. The truth of this has cost many parents and other relatives floods of tears. The stagnation of trade no doubt forwarded the business.

† Montesquieu, in his Spirit of Laws, vol. I. B. II. expresses himself in much the same manner, tho' he lived under an absolute monarchy, which gives the more weight to his sentiments.

"To prevent the executive power (says he) from being able to oppress, it is requisite that the armies, with which it is intrusted, should consist of the people, and have the same spirit as the people, as was the case at Rome, till the time of Marius. To ob-
 "tain

the judgment of truth and soberness, founded on a thorough knowledge of the laws and constitution of this Country, and a knowledge of human nature, and the history of mankind? If these wise and salutary provisions are, however, neglected, or habitually violated, must not this be unconstitutional, prove prejudicial to the Community, and produce effects peculiarly disgraceful to our

"tain this end, there are only two ways, either that the persons employed in the army should have sufficient property to answer for their conduct to their fellow-subjects, and be enlisted only for a year, as was customary at Rome: or if there should be a standing army, composed chiefly of the most despicable part of the nation, the legislative power should have a right to disband them as soon as it pleased; the soldiers should live in common with the rest of the people; and *no separate camp, barracks, or fortress, should be suffered.*" He elsewhere tells us, that a nation, whose government is a limited monarchy, like our own, or one which admits the advantages of a republican form, will be very jealous of making a separate order of the profession of arms, and that the military state with them is constantly allied with that of the citizen, and even sometimes with that of the magistrate; *to the end that these qualities may be a pledge for their country, which should never be forgotten.*

It is unnecessary to quote any more to the same purpose,—how that France, in the earliest times of her monarchy, guarded by a *Militia* against the evils that attend a standing army. The Reader sees, that these two great luminaries in the law in all its branches, Blackstone and Montesquieu, are express in condemning *standing armies, separate camps, and barracks or fortresses*; as things which *should not be suffered*, because always dangerous to the liberties of a free people. Other authorities to the same effect abound. Should the voice of Aristocracy presume to blame or condemn these sentiments, we will only say, that it is honourable to be condemned in such good company. Should the people, misinformed or misled, acquiesce in such measures as these great men have expressly condemned, as being unconstitutional and unsafe, they have themselves to blame, and must stand by the consequences, of which those that would open their eyes, and direct their attention to the interest of the Public, and their own shall be guiltless. Let them revere the constitution of their Country, and insist, before too late, on a due regard to its wise and salutary regulations, and we shall be in no danger from what is pernicious in French principles, or seditious in internal malecontents, if such exist. That government is allowed to be good, which hath in itself the capacity of growing better, through due attention to its constitution; and such is the government of Britain, were its constitution duly regarded, and the principles and provisions of it carried into effect; without which it may gradually degenerate into the most arbitrary and oppressive.

our Country and our times? Have not camps been formed at vast expence, in the heart of the Country, and are they not in agitation to be still formed, while no foreign invasion, or even internal insurrection can rationally be pleaded in justification of the measure? Are not barracks also ordered to be built in different parts of the kingdom, and many of them nearly finished, while attempts are making to render the measure still more universal; and that in defiance of the Constitution, and of the laws of the land, and of sound policy, if we admit the decision of the venerable Judge which is quoted above?

Though the relief of part of the subjects may be urged for the expediency of this measure; whence such indeed may be induced to favour it; yet should they bear in mind, that it may prove fraught in future with dangerous consequences to themselves and posterity, in common with the rest of the community. What at first only stretches out a hand to assist, may afterwards exert a multitude of arms to oppress. To this nothing can be more favourable than the stupor of the people, whose slavery has been always preceded by their slumber or sleep. Such as advise to a measure of this nature, will doubtless look upon themselves as the warm friends of Government; but in reality they act like Rehoboam's young counsellors, and may see the effects of their conduct when they cannot remedy them. By such a measure they would indeed be thought to mean society a real service; but see there be no ground to apply the old adage, *We dread the Greeks even when they offer presents.*

The present menacing tumults in Ireland, from what hath transpired, seem partly to arise from similar apprehensions; and it must be confessed, that some late measures, taken in connection with other circumstances, furnish matter for serious alarm. Though the present state of that kingdom may be urged as a reason for introducing and passing a bill in their Parliament, which bears the most threatening aspect on the liberties of the subject; yet such a bold and unprecedented measure must create alarm, and lead to suspect it may be intended as a prelude to a similar measure in Britain. Should the guardians of the Constitution permit themselves in any instances to infringe upon it, how dangerous the precedent! and with what

what consistency could they punish others for want of due respect to the laws? If it may be invaded, one article after another, can we be assured that the whole may not some time or other be changed or lost? The great charter of a people's rights is not like a nose of wax, which may be formed and fashioned at pleasure, as may best comport with private purposes. Can the *swinish multitude* be supposed to preserve a veneration for any institution, with which they see their superiors in wisdom, wealth, and station, making so free?

Should Judges on the bench so far exceed their legal powers, as to presume to menace and brow-beat a respectable Jury of citizens, sworn to do their duty, and to recommend the prisoner, though acquitted by his peers, conformable to the powers with which the laws of their country invest them; would not this be attempting, in the very seat, and under the forms of justice, to subvert, or render of no good effect, the boast of Britons, and the grand palladium of British liberty; and to set the opinion and just resentment of the people, for such daring encroachments on their rights, at defiance? What good can such conduct be supposed to produce; nay, what serious evils may not originate from it? This would be levelling the ax at the root of the dearest rights and enjoyments of life. Hath the power of appealing from the decision of the Justiciary Court in North Britain also been lately taken away? Had not our forefathers been more anxious to recover, than we are to preserve our liberties, we would have few at this day worth preserving. Let us beware of undervaluing what they have purchased, and transmitted to us, at the expence of blood.

The attempts to garrison so many places with *barracks* are calculated to inspire apprehensions of serious consequences. Neither our Laws, nor the Constitution of our Country warrant such a measure, if we may depend on the judgment of the able Lawyer referred to already. The purchase of the ground, and the erection of these barracks will require a very considerable sum; and why should this additional burden be saddled upon the nation, without necessity, and contrary to law, or the express provisions of the Constitution; at a time when our public debt is so immense, and our commerce ruined by an im-
politic

politic and calamitous war; and while we have become bound by treaties to furnish subsidies to foreign powers, almost to the amount of a million sterling annually? Our own military establishment over and above, costs the nation at least two millions and a half per annum; and to this vast expenditure, may be added unknown sums for jobs, the peculation of Contractors and other retainers. A serious load indeed! And pray, what does the nation reap from all this in return? If this measure is not intended, it is at least calculated, to alienate the minds of the soldiers from the citizens, by keeping them detached, as a distinct class of men; whence they may come to be prepared, if not so in some degree already, to act against the people in whatever manner their superiors may please. Even in France, in its most despotic state, the soldiers were enlisted only for a short and defined period, at the expiration of which they could demand their discharge, in order to return to their immediate connections and respective callings in life, and intermix with the rest of the people. Thus were they prepared to take an active part, not in subjugating their Country, or binding the chains of their fellow subjects the faster; but in emancipating both from the bondage and tyranny of their old political system in church and state: whereas, had they been enlisted for life, like ours, and quite detached from the mass of the people, by being formed into a profession perpetually distinct from them, and precluding all social intercourse with them, the old despotic government of France would have still survived in all its vigour.

Reason, common sense, and the Bill of Rights † allow, that every member of society should have it in his power to defend himself and property on any emergency; and of course, that he should be allowed the means of defence, which would entirely supercede the necessity of standing armies, where offensive war, or foreign conquest, both of which are to be reprobated, is not the object. But should the most worthy and patriotic citizens keep arms, and be trained to their use, they would be treated as persons dangerous to the peace of society, if not as rebels. If so with the subjects in general, it is still worse with a certain description

† "That the subjects which are Protestants, may have arms for their defence," &c. *Bill of Rights, Art. 7.*

tion of them. It is well known, that even when the Country was in imminent danger, in consequence of a formidable rebellion raised in its bosom, the English Dissenters, by taking up arms for its defence, and the security of the reigning Family, exposed themselves to heavy penalties, and lay at the mercy of any one that might chuse to prosecute them; till Parliament was pleased, in their wisdom and clemency, to pass an act of absolution in their favour! What more could be required for their security, had they even attempted to disturb the Government, or overturn the Constitution? And are they not well rewarded for their zeal and loyalty, by being still branded with legal disqualifications, and treated as aliens or step-children in the state?

The most material, and even fatal changes, both in the government and constitution of a kingdom, may be effected by means apparently inadequate; which, notwithstanding, may be sure though slow in their operations; whence the greater need to watch and guard against them. That prudent axiom applies here with full force, "*principiis obsta,*" *oppose and check the very first appearances of evil.* The levying new troops and augmenting the old, together with the erection of Barracks in inland towns, (a measure attended with danger to the community, and vast expence) though under the specious pretext of supporting a war, declared by high authority to be *just and necessary*, and suppressing a spirit of *sedition*, which is supposed to be fermenting among the people, may yet prove the engine of enslaving the Country, should Heaven permit, and making our Government in future as arbitrary as ever was that of France. The wisest and best means Rulers can use to prevent discontent and sedition among the people, is to furnish no pretext for them by their measures: for while subjects owe honour and obedience in things lawful, governors are bound to avoid every thing that may tend to provoke them to wrath. The reign of popular anarchy, however much to be detested and guarded against, must, in the nature of the thing, be of short duration; for it will soon effect its own destruction or cure: but the influence of wrong measures in Rulers, and the despotism these are calculated to produce and support, though more uniform and

and regular in their operation, are yet more permanent and dangerous in their consequences. Both are to be dreaded, and cautiously avoided; but the one never to be attempted as a remedy for the other: for we must not do evil that good may come.

The opposers of reform consider the present crisis, as one of them is pleased to express himself, as *strongly marked by a baneful spirit of discontent and innovation, as absurd and unreasonable in itself, as it is dangerous and destructive in its consequences.* Hence it is inferred, "that it seems incumbent on every true Friend of his Country to stand forth in defence of her cause, and counteract, with all his might" what they are pleased to brand as *sedition principles*, "which are certainly not more inimical to the interests of the State, than to the happiness and comfort of the individual." They tell us of discontent and innovation, but the query is, Do they take the most proper steps to remove or prevent these? Do they not prescribe a corrosive instead of a remedy? Such charges, of which some are very lavish, are evidently levelled against those who wish for reform in the State; and, it would seem, meant to bring odium on them and the cause which they have espoused. But they seem not to advert, how easily they can be retorted upon themselves. Let the candid judge, who are the greatest innovators, those that are daily making inroads on the Constitution of their Country, by innovations which it neither warrants nor recognizes; and some of which, to use their own language above, are absurd and unreasonable in themselves, and dangerous and destructive in their consequences, not less inimical to the true interests of the state, than to the happiness and comfort of individuals; and also such as applaud these measures, and are determined to defend and support them, be the result what will: or those that legally petition for such reform of the abuses that are allowed to exist, as may restore the Constitution to its primitive state and energy, and happily prevent such dangerous innovations in future. To tell us, that the cause opposed to the reformation of these, is the case of our Country, and entitled to the warm support of every true friend to its interest, is in effect to palm upon the Public a gross falsehood: for it is the cause only of those who have an interest in perpetrating

tuating these abuses, which produce consequences subversive of the peace and prosperity of the Country in general, and form a monster in its bosom which is daily devouring its vitals. Solomon said of a certain class of men, *When they speak you fair, believe them not; for there are seven abominations in their heart:* and is there no reason to fear that such fair speeches, as they are calculated, so may be intended, to veil something that cannot undisguised bear the light?

If discontents really exist, is this the only rational and constitutional mean of suppressing them? Must not every new departure from the Constitution tend rather to cherish these, and to furnish additional arguments for their justification? How absurd and inconsistent the conduct of some men, who seem to have a purpose to serve, and to be more anxious to support a system that promises to reward their zeal, than to promote the real interest of their Country! To accomplish this, they bawl out perpetually against *innovation, French principles, levellers, republicans*, and what not? while the system they espouse and defend, owes its very existence, and present magnitude to innovation, and a wide departure from the Constitution, as established at the Revolution in 1688;—a Revolution they at the same time affect to celebrate in the most fulsome strains, for reasons best known to themselves. With them to adhere to the Constitution, is innovation;—to seek reform, by peaceable and constitutional means, of those evils that threaten its very existence, and have already preyed upon its vitals, is branded as an attempt to overthrow it, and effect a total Revolution in the state;—with them, to talk of men possessing rights as members of civil society, and having claim to a voice in the election of those who have power to assess their property, and enact laws that may affect their liberty and their life, is stigmatized as preaching up French principles, and attempting to reduce this Country to a state of anarchy and confusion! And yet, strange to tell, these very men arrogate to themselves an exclusive claim to patriotism, and would be thought to be the only firm friends of their country! To every attentive observer, however, the ears of the ass, as in the fable, must appear from under the lion's skin: for

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such colouring cannot long make black seem to be white, and white black, even to the most superficial thinker. Misrepresentation, calumny, and falsehood may indeed impose for a time upon the credulous and unexperienced, but cannot always support a bad cause, nor secure the character of *patriots* to those who are ambitious of acquiring it by such means.

That evils of considerable magnitude exist in the state, and claim speedy reform, we are assured on the respectable authority of some members of the very House of Lords. In the course of the debate on the Debtor and Creditor bill, Lord Rawdon said, "That 20,000 at least were confined for debt in England alone. He professed his astonishment, that mischiefs so great should have been permitted to exist for such a length of time, as appeared upon good evidence to have existed in consequence of the law respecting arrests for debts; from which, (he added,) infinite mischiefs, and cruel hardships have arisen, to the utter ruin of industrious manufacturers, artists and labourers under their misfortunes, not fault." Were these remarks construed into a libel on the Constitution, tho' they clearly point out the necessity of reform in some of our laws? Of the vast number mentioned above, is there no reason to suppose that many have just ground to complain, that their liberty as British subjects is too little respected?—that the good of their Country, and connections, which their enlargement might promote, is in this instance entirely overlooked?

Certain Bills lately brought into Parliament by some servants of the Crown, seemed too plainly to indicate a disposition unfavourable to the liberties of the subject†; for in what other light can we view an attempt to place the native rights and liberties of Britons, in a certain case that may often occur, in the sole power of an individual, who was not to be in that particular responsible for his conduct, while no room was left for complaint or appeal? Should we see the right of communicating our thoughts on subjects deemed interesting to the community, and indeed to all mankind, invaded, and the venerable character of Justices

† Of this nature was the Alien bill in particular, at least in the state in which it was introduced to the House.

sices of the peace converted into informers, and degraded into spies, without any specific rule by which to regulate their judgement and conduct; have we no reason to think our liberties in danger? Should self-instituted societies, supported by wealth and influence, presume in any instance to arrogate and exercise the rights of the supreme executive power, over their fellow subjects, would not this, taken in connection with the measure chiefly animadverted on in this paper, and others of equal notoriety, afford an unfavourable symptom?

On the measure of Barracks, a noble, honest, and independent Senator remarks, (Lord Gage, Deb. Com. 11. 388.) "There is one thing fatal above all others, that must be the consequence of so great a body of troops being kept on foot in Britain, and will be (mark his expression,) *the finishing stroke to all our liberties*. As the towns in Britain will not be able much longer to contain quarters for them, most of those who keep public houses, being nearly ruined by soldiers billeted on them; so on pretence of the necessity of it, barracks will be built for quartering them, which will be as so many fortresses with strong garrisons in them, erected in all parts of Britain, which can tend to nothing but by degrees to subdue and enslave the kingdom. But if ever this should be attempted, it will be incumbent on every true Briton to endeavour to prevent it by all methods; and as it would be *the last stand that could ever be made for our liberties*, rather than suffer it to be put into execution, it would be our duty boldly to remonstrate, and never to desist, till our liberties were secured, and *the authors of our intended slavery, brought to condign punishment*." Are the fears of this noble Lord now so far realized, and shall the cautions and advice they suggested have no weight? If we are in no present danger on this head, it must be owing more to the goodness and watchful care of Heaven, than to modern men or measures. Indeed, our long, deep and criminal concern in the degrading traffic of slaves may be justly requited in Providence by the intralment of ourselves and our posterity: for the Judge of all the earth often writes the sin of a people in the mode and means of punishing it; who once said in a similar case, *Know of a surety that nation whom they shall serve will*

I judge: and afterwards shall they come out with great substance. It is evident, that nothing but a wise and timely reform, in our moral and political conduct, can save this Country; and as these have a mutual and necessary influence and subserviency, those who oppose either in present circumstances, let them pretend what they will, and use what mode of reasoning they please, to keep themselves and friends in countenance, cannot merit well of the Community by such conduct, whose enemies they in effect are; and the event may shew that they deserve to be ranked with such. When we consider the nature of war in general, and the calamitous fruits of the present impolitic war in particular, both to ourselves and our enemies, with the vast preparations making both by sea and land, at home and abroad, that may eventually deluge the earth with blood, and strew it with human carnage, (for the slaughter of men is the only end yet gained) one is almost tempted to adopt the request of the Royal Psalmist, leaving it to Heaven to judge of, and discriminate characters; *Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered: let them also that hate him flee before him. Rebuke the company of spear-men, the multitude of the bulls; scatter thou the people that delight in war;*—war, which like a storm of hail, mingled with blood, and fire, and vapours of smoke, scatters arrows, fire-brands, and death; yet are there some who seem to think all this but sport, and others who can find their pleasure in the horrid scene!

TO THE KING.

May it please your Majesty,

WE, your Majesty's affectionate and loyal subjects, the undersigned Merchants, Manufacturers, Traders, and other Inhabitants of the City of Glasgow, and its Neighbourhood, humbly beg leave to approach your Throne in the present awful and alarming crisis.

We see our manufactures ruined, our commerce daily declining, and misery and poverty making rapid progress through the nation.—We daily see those involved in ruin, who,

who, by an unwearied course of successful industry, had every reason to believe that they were secure, not only in a competency for themselves, but in an ability to do good to others.—Thousands of our fellow-citizens are already out of employment, and it is feared that thousands more will soon be crying for want of bread.—At a time, like the present, when specie is so scarce, and provisions are so much advancing at home, we view, with serious concern, such vast sums of money, and great quantities of provisions sent out of your Majesty's dominions.—We feel ourselves engaged in a war which we deem the cause of all these calamities, and which, in our opinion, will be unprofitable in the event.—We behold nothing in the continuance of the war but accumulation of debt, of misery, and of bloodshed; the avowed purpose for which it was undertaken, being now accomplished, as the enemy is already driven from the territories of your Majesty's Ally.

We beseech your Majesty, therefore, to take these matters into your serious consideration, and intreat that the sword, now drawn, may be sheathed without the farther effusion of human blood.

We address your Majesty, as the Father and Protector of your people, and humbly request, that you will use your best endeavours to restore to your dutiful subjects those blessings which Peace only can give, and by which alone the efforts of our labour and industry can be successful†.

Glasgow, July 1, 1793.

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Mr

† To the Petition, of which the above is a copy, a considerable number have daily adhibited their names since the subscription was opened, many of them indeed respectable in point of rank, wealth and character. Seeing the restoration of peace on honourable terms is an object of vast moment to all Europe, and constitutes the general wish of this nation in particular, should not the inhabitants of other places imitate an example so laudable? Even allowing we might not be so happy as to succeed in our application, tho' we should hope otherwise, we will at least exonerate our own conscience, and wash our hands of the innocent blood that may be shed in the unhappy contest—a consideration which merits the attention of the friends of war: for Heaven hath declared that blood can be purged only with blood.

For our consolation under the misfortunes consequent upon this
disastrous

MR. WHARTON'S SPEECH

UPON THE

CONSTITUTION,

MAY 31, 1793.

FROM THE MORNING CHRONICLE.

MR. WHARTON rose to make his promised motion. We heard, he said, on every side, of the glorious Revolution in 1688, and of the Constitution, as settled at that glorious Revolution. It was a note which he had always listened to with pleasure, and he repeated it himself with rapture. But what was the rational foundation of our satisfaction at the recollection of the glorious Revolution? It assuredly was not, that the possession of the throne, and the regular

disastrous war, we are indeed perpetually told that our enemies are in a much worse situation—that they are torn by internal dissension and anarchy, and falling almost daily in thousands a sacrifice to their combined enemies, while these gain the most brilliant advantages, with very inconsiderable loss. Allowing this to be a fair statement of facts, what consolation can it yield to a humane mind that regards all mankind as fellow creatures, and the offspring of the same universal Parent? Can such real evils counterbalance our own losses, and repay the vast expence of blood and treasure which we may incur? If there are who can deem the calamities of 26 millions of Frenchmen, and the blood of so many myriads of them, a sufficient compensation for all the miseries we ourselves can endure by, and in consequence of this war, who would not say of them, *My soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly,—mine honour be not thou united?* But the above is far from being a just representation, as time will sufficiently shew, tho' it may now pass current. With respect to the operations and effects of the war, and the internal state and resources of our enemies, we are continually amused with such a detail, as appears from a variety of circumstances to consist of little else than falsehoods or exaggerations; while our own situation and losses, are carefully concealed or misrepresented. The longer this artifice succeeds, the more terrible the consequence.

regular hereditary succession to it, were at that time disturbed and interrupted. It was not that we expelled *one* king and *one* family, and appointed *another* king and *another* family in their room. The necessity of such changes was, at all times, to be *deplored*; and the events themselves could only be justified by the *necessity*. The only rational foundation of our approbation of that Revolution *must* be, that at that time such principles were confirmed, and such wise and wholesome provisions made for our constitutional security and happiness, as might prevent all future necessity for a *similar* Revolution. Whoever approved of that Revolution declared at the same time, that the constitutional provisions then obtained were wise and wholesome; that they were *worthy* objects of a national struggle; that they not only *justified* resistance, but made it *meritorious*; and that they were *cheaply* purchased at the price of all the blood that was shed upon the occasion, as well as the dethronement of a *guilty* king, and the extirpation of his *guiltless* family. But an approbation of that Revolution went still farther. It declared, that if, by *any* means,—by force or by fraud, by violence or by corruption, these wholesome and necessary constitutional provisions should be taken away or frustrated, the same objects would again justify the same national struggle, and the same extremities, unless they could be recovered and re-obtained by more gentle, more peaceful, and therefore more happy means.

He asserted, (and said he risked nothing by the assertion, for no man would be hardy enough to deny it, and he pledged himself to *prove* it in a Committee of the House,) that all that was valuable to the people of this country, all the provisions which were stipulated to secure the peace and prosperity, the individual liberty, and the general property of the people of this land, had all been, since the Revolution, taken away—All!

He must intreat the attention of the House for a
very

very few moments, whilst he very briefly brought back to their recollection what this country established by the Revolution. First, 'To avoid all future mistake, and that the contract between Prince and People might be clearly understood, the Revolutionists began by altering the oaths of the contracting parties. They altered the coronation oath for all future sovereigns in this realm; and they altered the oath of allegiance for themselves and for all future subjects. They cut up by the roots the damnable doctrine of *passive obedience and non-resistance*, by emphatically specifying and ordaining the following words of their former oath, 1st W. and Mary, ch. 8. "I declare that it is not lawful upon any pretence whatever to take up arms against the King," &c. &c. should not from thenceforth be required or enjoined.

It was not so much to relieve the conscience of the subjects that these words of their former oath were selected, recited, and abolished; for no oath of slavery ever did, or ever will, or ever ought to bind a nation or an individual. It was something worse than perjury or sacrilege to keep an oath of slavery. This alteration was made to prevent the future sovereigns of this country from being misled, as the four preceding sovereigns had been, to trust to a senseless superstition about *Royalty*, which tho' many persons for their interests have professed, no man of common sense ever entertained.

Their next care was to provide for the due administration of the Executive Power, and the responsibility of its confidential advisers. They therefore enacted that, 12th William III. chap. 2. "All matters and things relating to the well-governing of this kingdom, which are cognizable in the Privy Council, shall be signed by such as shall advise and consent to the same;"—Thereby guarding, as far as laws could guard, against that accursed engine of despotism, a Cabinet Council, or that more accursed instrument, an Interior Cabinet.

Their

Their attention was next directed, to the double representation of the people; the only possible security for all other provisions—their Representatives in Parliament, and their Representatives in courts of Justice—the House of Commons and Juries. They passed over untouched, and left as they found them, the Nobility and the Church; they were considering the solid and substantial parts of the constitutional edifice, and did not much concern themselves about the gilding and the varnish. They therefore proceeded to establish the principle of a fair and free, and frequent election of the Representatives of the Commons in Parliament, as might be seen by a reference to the Acts passed in the first and second, and third years of William and Mary.

And having thus, as they imagined, provided for the real election of the representative body in Parliament, they secured the independence and integrity of that body after its election, by enacting, that—“No person who has an office, or place of profit under the King, or receives a pension from the Crown, shall be capable of serving as a Member of the House of Commons.” 12 W. III. ch. 2.

Having thus secured the purity and independence of the people's representatives in Parliament, they proceeded to the other important branch of their representation by jury; and they decreed, that juries should be fairly taken, without partiality, and should act freely without influence. 1st W. and Mary, ch. 2d.—They also decreed, that excessive bail should not be required; that excessive fines should not be imposed; and that *illegal* and *cruel* punishments should not be inflicted; and to secure those objects, they ordained, that thenceforward the Judges' commissions should be made, “*quam diu se bene gesserint*†; and that their salaries should be ascertained and established,” in order to make the Judges independent of the Crown. 12th W. III. ch. 2.

Now, all these provisions, (the objects and consequences

† i. e. So long as they acted in character.

quences of the glorious Revolution,) would have no value; they would be nugatory and worthless; they would be a mere mockery; unless they were effectually to obtain and secure to the people of this island, these three important points: First, an honest and responsible exercise of the Executive Authority. — Secondly, Real, independent, and faithful Representatives of the Commons in Parliament. — Thirdly, a fair and impartial Administration of Justice in the Courts of Law. — We, who had no predilection for any family whatever, (except as connected with these objects) in the words of our Ancestors at the time of the Revolution, did now again, — “ Claim, demand, and insist upon all these as our undoubted Rights: the true, ancient and undubitable rights and liberties of this kingdom.” 1st W. and M. ch. 2.

If then, by various means, it happened, (as he asserted and undertook to prove in a Committee of this House) that this provisional responsibility of the Privy Council no longer remains; that the election of the House of Commons is, neither fair nor free, nor frequent; that this provisional independence of its Members is gone, and that the House at present swarms with “ Persons having offices and places of profit under the King, and receiving from the Crown.” That Juries are not fairly and impartially taken; that they do not act freely and without influence; that excessive bail has been and may be required; that excessive fines may be and have been imposed; that illegal and cruel punishments may be and have been inflicted; that the Judges are not independent of the Crown; that pensions may be and have been granted to some of them; and that lucrative offices may be and have been conferred upon others: by which means it cannot be said that their salaries are ascertained and established.

If these facts were so, he held it to be the duty of all those who, without hypocrisy, praised the Revolution, to endeavour to return us again to our constitutional

stitutional situation at that period, and to recover the lost or neglected provisions, that so we might effectually secure to ourselves and to our posterity, what our ancestors endeavoured, at the Revolution, to secure to themselves and to us.

He concluded with moving, " That a Committee be appointed to inquire, whether any, and which of the provisions made by Parliament in the reign of William and Mary, and in the reign of William the Third, for securing the responsible exercise of the Executive Authority,---for securing a real, and independent, and faithful representation of the Commons in Parliament;---and for securing a fair and impartial administration of Justice in the Courts of Law; whether any, and which of these have by any means been invalidated or taken away; and to consider, whether any, and which of those lost or invalidated provisions may be fit to be re-enacted and replaced, in order that the people of this land may recover that situation and security in which they were placed by the glorious Revolution in 1688.

For the motion	11
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Against it	71
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Majority	60
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N. B. To the preceding motion, and the forcible train of argument by which it is supported, no reply was made, nor indeed was a single remark offered upon it. Could the House in their wisdom believe, that the motion was quite frivolous, and the authorities referred to in support of it, a mere chimera, that they thought it unworthy of any answer? If they did, would not this be, to traduce the Constitution of their Country as the baseless fabric of a vision, and those that framed it as a parcel of poor silly visionaries? Or was it, because they found the authorities alluded to undeniable and respectable, and the arguments founded upon them unanswerable, that they thought proper

proper to dismiss the whole with a solitary negative, to shew that the omnipotent power of Parliament is above all authorities, and not to be encountered or parried off by reason or argument?

ADDRESS AND DECLARATION

OF THE

LEEDS CONSTITUTIONAL SOCIETY.

Friends and Countrymen!

WE, the Members of the Society for Constitutional Information at Leeds, feel it a duty incumbent on us to step forward with an Avowal of our Principles; more especially at this Juncture, when the Public Mind is agitated by the Jarrings of Faction, and ourselves stigmatized by the unmerited Calumnies of Self-interested Men.

Believe us unjustly represented as Sons of Darkness and Plot, or insensible to the Beauties of our own constitution, the peculiar excellency of which is, that it possesses in itself the power of improvement. But some one may ask, where shall the line be drawn? To what extent must improvement be carried? We answer, to the fundamental principle of all good Government, that of the equal right of partaking in the legislation of the country. Every person who contributes to the support of an institution, ought to have a voice in the Management thereof, especially if his happiness be involved in its welfare. Now, since every one contributes to the support of Government, ought not every one to have a vote in the choice of the people who have the disposal of their property and their ALL? A House of Commons so constituted would always speak the real sentiments

timents of the Nation. 'Tis highly probable, also, they would gradually and peaceably reform the abuses in Government: that taxes would be diminished, wars less frequent, Monopolies abolished, commerce extended, Arts and manufactures more encouraged, the laws simplified, and justice administered more expeditiously and at less expence:—"A consummation most devoutly to be wished!"

We are very sorry that some of our fellow citizens should be unhappily imposed upon respecting the equality contended for: 'tis an equality of rights, not an equality of property. The former is a sacred boon of Heaven, which ought never to be wrested from our hands; the latter a ruinous, absurd, foolish and contemptible notion, affronting to common honesty and common sense, which had not either been thought or hard of, till palmed upon us by wicked or foolish men, for the worst of purposes.

Remaining inattentive to the clamors of the malicious, and attentive to our own deportment, we invite the Friends of Freedom in Leeds, and its vicinity, to become members of our Association, to unite with us in the common Cause, and lend an helping hand in so laudable an undertaking.

DECLARATION.

AS the inhabitants of Great-Britain have not the free choice in the election of their Representatives in Parliament, it being a notorious fact*, that seventy-three peers, ninety-four commoners and the treasury, nominate and procure the return of three hundred and twenty members—a majority of one hundred and twenty-seven! and a proof also that our grievances are not ideal;—We, therefore, pledge ourselves to each other, and to all mankind, that we will, in concert with other patriotic societies, use every lawful

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and

* See the report of the Committee appointed to enquire into the state of Representation in England and Wales, just published.

and constitutional mean in our Power to obtain a representation of the purest kind.

We will sum up our every want in the Duke of Richmond's own words,†—"From every day's experience to the present hour, we are more and more convinced, that the restoring the right of voting universally to every man, not incapacitated by nature for want of reason, or by law for the commission of crimes, together with annual elections, is the only reform that can be permanent, and the only reform that is practicable;" and according to Mr. Pitt's Assertions,‡ "Without which (substantial reformation) neither the liberty of the nation can be preserved, nor a wise and virtuous administration secured." We are happy to say, these sentiments are exactly congenial to our feelings, and may we not thenceforth expect success? Then, and not till then, will the Leeds Constitutional Society relax from so necessary and important a business.

Resolved, That a subscription shall be immediately opened, for the Diffemination of political knowledge, and that we shall be happy to co-operate with other Societies for the Furtherance thereof.

Resolved, That every person admitted into this Society, do pledge himself, in the most solemn and unequivocal manner, to recognize our principles, and adopt the same peaceable demeanor.

Resolved, That all of us disavow and detest every idea of a Revolution, or in any manner disturbing the public tranquillity; but as the only prevention, we will press for a Reform, by every legal and constitutional mean in our power; not doubting to be joined by every virtuous and independant citizen of Great

† In a Letter dated Aug. 15, 1783, to Lieut. Colopel Sharman of the corps of Irish Volunteers, lately republished.

‡ As express in a hand-bill, distributed through the whole kingdom in the year 1782, by order of Mr Pitt and the Duke of Richmond.

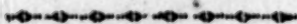
Great Britain, and that our efforts will be eventually crowned with success.

By order of the SOCIETY,

April 11, 1793.

JOSEPH FIRTH, President.

JOSEPH NUTTER. Secretary.



TO THE

INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN OF SHEFFIELD, AND
THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.

THE subject of PARLIAMENTARY REFORM has so long been the common topic of Conversation, and has employed for many years the pens of so many excellent writers, that it is but reasonable to suppose the greatest part of the Nation, who have given the subject that necessary degree of attention which its importance requires, must before this have made up their mind on the question.

Mr Grey having given notice that he means to make a Motion for leave to bring in a Bill to effect this desirable purpose on the 6th of May next, it is incumbent on all the Friends and Well-wishers to the measure, to come forward immediately, and by Petitions to the House of Commons, shew what is the sense of the People, and thereby give weight and efficacy to the laudable efforts of this truly enlightened and illustrious Patriot, in thus standing up for the first and most valuable Rights of Britons---the procurement of a *real, effectual, and complete* REPRESENTATION OF THE WHOLE PEOPLE in the Commons House of Parliament.

When our Ancestors first proposed Government by Representation, it is certain they intended *adequate* Representation---for no other deserves the name, or answers the end. Inadequate Representation in Parliament is utterly inconsistent with the idea

of a free Government; for a people governed contrary to their inclination, or by persons to whom they have given no commission for that purpose, cannot be said to be *free*.

It is an established maxim in all free States, that whoever contributes to the expences of Government ought to be satisfied concerning the application of the money contributed by them; consequently, ought to have a share in electing those who have a power of applying their money. Besides, every man has a life, a personal liberty, a character, a right to his earnings, a right to a religious profession and worship according to his conscience, in respect to all which, the Parliament can bind him in all cases whatsoever, and therefore he is still more deeply interested in a choice of those to whom this power is entrusted.

Taxation and Representation ought to go hand in hand. The taxes imposed by Parliament every Briton is liable to pay his proportion of---therefore every Briton ought to be represented. Nothing can be more absurd, or more *unjust*, than the idea that a part of the people, a *small* part of the People, and the most needy and *dependent* part of the People, should engross the power of electing Legislators, and deprive the majority and the independent part of the People of their right to chuse Legislators for themselves, which is the greatest and most important privilege the inhabitants of a free State can possess.

If a Friendly Society consisting of one hundred members, found that the whole power of the Society was engrossed by *three* members, and that the others could obtain nothing they wanted, or in the manner they wished to have it, could this Society be, with any shadow of propriety, called free? And yet, it will appear that Parliamentary Representation, on its present foot, is as inconsistent with Liberty as would be such a Society.

The Duke of Richmond in his Letter to the

Sheriff of Suffex, dated *Whitehall, Jan. 7, 1783*, says, " I take the grievance of the present state of Election to be, its gross inequality. All the Electors in Great-Britain do not amount to one sixth part of the whole People, and a still greater inequality subsists in the Elections made by that sixth part; for one-seventh part of *them* elect a majority, so that one forty-second part of the Nation disposes of the property of the whole, and have their lives and liberties at command. And this forty-second part, far from consisting of the most opulent part of the kingdom, is composed of the small boroughs, most of which are become either the private property of individuals, or are notoriously sold to the best bidder; so that the counties and great cities are, in fact, as well as the great mass of the people, swallowed up in this system of corruption."

Mr Pitt declared, on announcing his motion for a Parliamentary Reform in 1783, " That the state of Parliamentary Representation was *partial* and *inadequate*; that the progress of an undue influence was alarming and ominous; that the true spirit of Liberty had decayed; that the powers which check and control in the different branches of the Government were debilitated; that it was universally known and acknowledged that the House of Commons had departed from the original spirit and rules of the Constitution; and that the People of England complained with reason and justice, that there subsisted not between them and their Representatives, that strict community of interest and language which ought invariably to have prevailed."

He repeated the same sentiments when in office, on occasion of his motion for a Reform in Parliament, April 18, 1785, and supported it by such a striking picture of the degeneracy of this part of the Government, that Mr Powis accused him of having

pronounced " *a funeral oration* on the Constitution of " his country."

It is presumed, that no one will venture to suggest that Mr Pitt did not really believe what he asserted in the British Senate on these solemn occasions, or will endeavour to maintain that such assertions are mere declamation, instead of the well digested opinion of one of the ablest men in the Nation. With whatever indifference such opinions may be heard by those interested to support abuses, they are certainly a just cause of alarm to the impartial and reflecting part of the community.

In confirmation of the above, it appears by the General Statement of the Report (lately published) of the Committee of the Friends of the People in London, that

71 Peers, and the Treasury, return 167

91 Commoners return 139

17 Boroughs, not containing on an }
average 150 voters each, return } 21

2611 Persons return to serve in Parliament 327 Members

To these 327 add 28, who are returned by *compromises*, and it will appear, in what manner such a number of the House of Commons is elected, as constitutes a majority of no less than ONE HUNDRED AND NINETY-SEVEN of the Representatives of England and Wales!

" This majority of what are called the Representatives of the Commons (it appears by the same Report) are returned by the 170th part of the male subjects of England paying taxes, even supposing these only to amount to two millions. And the partial distribution of the Elective franchise, which subdivides this 170th part in 155 other parts, commits the choice of Representatives to select Bodies of Men of such limited numbers, as renders them an easy prey to the artful, and a ready purchase to the wealthy."

It further appears by the said Report,

" That

“ That the right of voting is regulated by no uniform or rational principle respecting either property or condition. That from the caprice with which it has been varied, and the obscurity in which it has become involved by time and contradictory decisions, it is a source of infinite confusion, litigation and expence.

“ That the manner in which Elections are conducted is disgraceful to the name of free Election. That it is inconvenient to the Elector and ruinous to the Candidate; that it is a scourge to the honest and peaceable, and a harvest to the dissolute and corrupt.

“ That the power given to returning officers, too often (except in counties) men of extreme ignorance, or known depravity, added to the delay of the House of Commons in attending to the Petitions for redress, frequently deprives the Electors of their true Representatives for years.

“ That the present system of Election Laws which professes to qualify a man for Parliament who possesses three hundred pounds a year, is only calculated to insult the People with the shew of an independent choice, because, by its operation, it disables all, who have not incomes of at least as many thousands, from becoming Candidates.

“ Lastly, that the length of the duration of Parliaments, subjected to the will of the Crown, tends to make the Representative independent of the Constituent, to render him submissive to the commands of those in Power, and to disturb ‘ that happy union ‘ and good agreement between the King and People,’ which, by our ancestors at the Revolution, was so constitutionally asserted to arise ‘ from frequent and ‘ new elections.”

Seeing, therefore, that so small and disproportionate a number of the inhabitants of this Nation return Representatives to bind *the whole people*, consisting of eight millions, in all cases whatsoever, in Property, Liberty, and *even Life*—the Friends of Reform in
SHEFFIELD

SHEFFIELD and its Neighbourhood beg leave to submit the above candid Statement to the consideration of their townsmen and neighbours, together with a PETITION to the Commons in Parliament assembled, praying for a Reform thereof; and to request that those who are favourable to the measure will sign the same as speedily as possible, in hopes that the wishes of the People may be attended to, and a restoration made of those invaluable Rights and Privileges of which they have been too long unjustly deprived.

April 8, 1793.

*To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain in
Parliament assembled,*

THE PETITION

*Of the Inhabitants of the Town and Neighbourhood of
SHEFFIELD,*

Sheweth,

THAT the House of Commons is not, in the just Sense of the Words, what your Petitioners are from Form obliged to term it, viz. "*the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled,*" not being freely elected by a Majority of the whole People, but by a very small Portion thereof; and that from the partial Manner in which Members are sent to Parliament, and their long Continuance there, they are not the *real, fair, and independent* Representatives of the *whole People of Great Britain.*

Your Petitioners are Lovers of Peace, of Liberty, and of Justice. They are in general Tradesmen, and Artificers, unpossessed of Freehold Land, and consequently have no Voice in chusing Members to sit in Parliament;—but though they may not be *Freeholders*, they are *Men*, and do not think themselves fairly used in being excluded the Rights of *Citizens.*

Their

Their ALL is at Stake, equally with the Freeholder's; and whether that *All* be much or little, whilst they pay their full Share of Taxes, and are peaceable and loyal Members of Society, they see no Reason why they should not be consulted with Respect to the common Interests of their common Country. They think *Men* are Objects of Representation, and not the *Land* of a *Freeholder*, or the *Houses* of a *Borough-monger*.

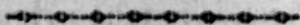
It is not *merely* because heavy and grievous Taxes oppress them, that your Petitioners pray for the Reform of Abuses, which are too notorious to be denied by the most prejudiced: It is as much on Account of the Application of the Money, as of the Money itself, for which they are concerned. They *love* their Country, and would contribute a Portion of their last Shilling to its Support, were they *sure* that every Shilling *paid* was well *expended*. They pray also for the Correction of this Abuse, because they are convinced that upon *it* depends the Peace, Happiness, and Prosperity of their Country.

That your Petitioners wish the House of Commons to become the *true* Representative, or Judgment of the Commons of Great-Britain, and the undoubted Guardian of the Interests of the People That the Delegates and their Constituents may feel one common Interest, Members of Parliament should be chosen for short Terms; and descending from their delegated Station, mix again with the People by whom they were chosen.

That the *Voice of the great Body of the People* ought not to be smothered by the *Voice of a partial Interest*; but should be fairly and fully heard: as nothing short of this will do away that unhappy *Spirit of Discontent* which so generally prevails in our Country; and *this done*, neither Proclamations nor Prosecutions will be necessary to secure its Tranquillity and Peace.

Your Petitioners therefore, relying with the greatest Confidence on the Virtue of some, and on the Candour,

Candour, good Sense, Prudence, and Justice of ALL, hope this honourable House will take these Premises into their most serious Consideration, and adopt such a Plan of *effectual* Reform in the Representation of the Commons in Parliament, and of the Duration of the same, as to their Wisdom shall seem proper.



The following Apology for the late excesses in France, appeared some time ago in one of our news-papers, under the signature of *Observator*, addressed to the Editor of the paper.

S I R,

FOR these three years past the French have been struggling for the preservation of their liberty against the arms of despots abroad, and the treachery of a faction at home. Engaged in such a cause, one would naturally have supposed, that the wishes of Britons for their success would have been unanimous, and that in this Island, the boasted seat of Liberty, their actions would neither have been misrepresented nor calumniated: but that, on the contrary, any violence into which, from the imperfection of human nature, they might have been led, would have been palliated and excused. To the disgrace of my countrymen, the reverse has been the case. They have become the dupes of a party, who have an interest in opposing the progress of Liberty, and who, by exaggeration and falsehood, have endeavoured to throw an odium on the whole French nation. Their success has been indeed great; and by the effect which their misrepresentations have had on the timid, the ignorant, and the selfish, the tide of popular odium is now strongly directed against the French. Cruelty and infidelity are held up as the principal characteristics of that nation, their excesses and their dissensions are greatly exaggerated, while every praise-worthy

worthy action that they have done, is, if possible, concealed from the public eye. These crimes, which, I own, they have in some degree been guilty of, I regret as much as any man; but at the same time, I am convinced, that they are owing to causes, which, in a great measure, lessen their criminality. It may, Sir, be considered as an axiom in politics, that the character of a nation is formed by the nature of their government and religion, and not by any thing peculiar to the climate or the soil. To be convinced of this, we need only reflect on the present, compared with that of the ancient inhabitants of Italy and Greece. The latter, animated with the noble spirit of Liberty, possessed courage, hospitality, independence, and a love of their country: but the former are sunk even beneath the level of other nations. Their minds, depressed by despotism and superstition, are insensible to every noble idea; and, in every respect, they are the reverse of their ancestors. Such then are the effects of a government upon a people; and if we reflect upon the nature of the old French government, we scarcely can expect that the national character can be good. The people are taught, not a respect for virtue and talents, but for titles and wealth. The grand Monarch, tho' a fool, was the god of every Frenchman, and his glory their greatest boast. Their oppressors, the nobility, were considered as beings of a superior order; and an avaricious and hypocritical clergy were approached with the highest reverence and regard. By the example of a luxurious court, all ranks were corrupted, and frivolity and dissipation were the leading features of the nation. Such a people, convinced of the wretchedness of their situation, and of the absurdity of the opinions by which they had been ruled, could scarce be expected to preserve moderation in their resentment against those to whom they had so long been dupes, and by whom they had been so severely oppressed.

From

From thus reflecting on the character of the French nation, produced by the nature of their old government (while at the same time, the people, from the nature of their education, were left unrestrained by religion) we find less subject for wonder in the excesses they have committed. If with this we take into consideration what they have suffered, and how much they have been betrayed by those to whom they have committed their defence, we may even be surprised at the moderation they have preserved.

I may also observe, that from prejudice many are disposed to magnify the enormity of any popular violence. They will hear, almost without any emotion, of ten thousand lives lost in a battle, the wretched victims of Royal pride and ambition, whilst the death of a comparatively small number of persons, sacrificed to the just vengeance of an injured people, will strike them with the utmost horror. But admitting the cruelty of the French in its fullest extent, is the British history entirely free from stains of a similar kind? In the House of Commons, the orators on both sides, with a few exceptions, seem to have endeavoured to surpass one another in abusing the whole French nation. Notwithstanding we have been so liberal of our censure and abuse, I am afraid, that to an impartial eye our records will appear disgraced to as great a degree with similar crimes of which the French are accused. The long continued persecution of the reign of the Second Charles, and the Seventh James, the deliberate massacre of Glencoe in that of our glorious deliverer William, the many defenceless and innocent victims of the rebellion in favour of the Pretender, after it was so crushed as to give no farther ground of apprehension, and our still later transactions in India, equal, if they do not surpass in treachery and barbarity, any of the enormities committed in France. With little propriety, therefore, can we accuse the French; with still less can we consider it as the operation of the principles they

they have adopted, as with justice we might say, that the massacres of Glencoe, &c. was the result of our Constitution, as modified at the Revolution; or that the murders in India were the necessary effects of our present happy establishment.

I have thus endeavoured to apologise for the violations of which the French have been accused, and every benevolent man would wish to see them completely excused, by imputing them to their proper cause,—the nature of the old government. With respect to their infidelity, it has certainly been exaggerated to an extravagant degree: but even allowing it to exist, it may still admit of considerable alleviation. Shocked with the absurdities of the Church of Rome, and with the scandalous lives of its priests, unacquainted with the Protestant faith, which, from the persecution and degradation it laboured under, could but tardily be diffused among the higher ranks, with the well known propensity of our nature to run from one extreme to another, it is not even to be wondered at if their learned men have carried their scepticism to excess. But this is an excuse which cannot be urged for the infidelity so prevalent in our land, and when we see Atheism, at least in its practical form, almost universal among the higher ranks, we can with little propriety accuse the French of this crime.

I can now conclude this vindication of the French with a pleasing reflection. The causes to which these general vices were owing are removed. The reign of Despotism in France is now no more. The people are made acquainted with their importance in Society; and that state of wretchedness and dependance, so unfavourable to the exercise of the human faculties, is fled. The people are now relieved from the bonds of superstition. Popery, unsupported by the civil magistrate, will now fall under the weight of its folly and error; and Protestantism, now not depressed, will exert the energy of truth, and in no long
 1 time

time will completely establish it. At such innovations, altho' they may be attended with some temporary evils, the heart of every good man will rejoice: The Philosopher will exult in the destruction of Tyranny, which always retards the progress of truth; the Philanthropist will rejoice in the emancipation of twenty-four millions of his fellow creatures, from oppression, ignorance, and misery; and the Christian will return thanks to his God for the downfall of superstition, and for the removal of these causes which have so long obstructed the propagation of the Gospel of Peace.

N. B. Since the note subjoined to the Glasgow petition, page 196, was written, something appeared in certain newspapers, apparently with a view to expose the friends of that measure to public ridicule. Yet admitting the truth of what was in these asserted, there is reason to believe there are still in that city many, respectable for wealth, rank, and character, whose humanity would induce them to subscribe a petition, the object of which is to restore peace to our distressed Country, and relief to many thousands who suffer by present measures. Were it not that so many of those who are least able to bear it, suffer by these measures, perhaps the best way would be to let them take their course, persuaded they will in all probability soon prove their own chastisement, and afford their authors and abettors abundant cause of regret. To shew upon what frivolous grounds objections against popular measures are raised, I need only insert a paragraph which appeared lately in one of our newspapers, as introductory to the Paisley Petition for Peace.

MEETING AT PAISLEY.

The following paragraph appeared in our paper of the 23d of July:—

“ A

" A general meeting of the inhabitants of Paisley was on Saturday last, by authority of the Magistrates, held to deliberate on the most proper mode of applying some temporary relief to the great number of poor tradesmen at present out of employment in that place; which humane business being concluded, the declining state of trade and universal distress of the country became the subject of discussion, when the meeting was unanimously of opinion, That the ruinous War in which Britain is now engaged, is the sole source of the present very great and increasing calamities; and that an humble petition to his Majesty, praying, that a speedy conclusion may be put to it, would be highly proper at this time. A committee of twenty-one was accordingly appointed to prepare the same for subscription, and manage the business with as much expedition as its importance required."

" The above is inserted in the Edinburgh Herald of Wednesday last, with some alterations; the most material of which is, that these words, "*By order of the Magistrates,*" are substituted in place of, "*By authority of the Magistrates.*" After quoting the Gazetteer in this unfair manner, there is added:—" In contradiction to the above, the Town Clerk of Paisley has given the following state of facts in the Glasgow Courier."

" I can assure you, Sir, that no application to the above effect was made to our Magistrates; that when they saw the advertisement in the papers, they caused the strictest enquiry to be made to find out the author; and they even wrote to the publisher of the Gazetteer, to know who authorised him to insert such a thing, but as yet have not received any satisfactory information. Our Magistrates, in the most positive manner, disavow any authority given by them to call the above meeting, which, in the way represented, seems calculated to inflame the minds of sober citizens against the measures of Government."

" Upon enquiry, we find, that *the meeting was held by permission of the Principal Magistrate of Paisley*; at least, so far as it regarded the applying relief to tradesmen out of employment. Whether the subsequent business respecting the petition for peace received the sanction of any Magistrate, we do not pretend to say, and the paragraph alluded to by no means insinuates that it did.

" It is in no way surprising, that the public spirit of the inhabitants of Paisley should give offence to the *Reeve's Corps*, nor that the vehicles of ministerial slander should endeavour to discredit a meeting of this kind. We insert the petition for peace below, and the unprejudiced will judge, whether there is any thing in it, or in our paragraph, respecting the meeting in which it originated, that *seems calculated to inflame the minds of sober citizens against the measures of Government?*

" We did not undertake our Journal with the view of bestowing undistinguishing censure, or unmerited praise, upon either men or measures, and we hope that *their* countrymen will no longer ascribe to the Magistrates of Paisley that patriotism and humanity, which they so anxiously disclaim."

" Here follows the petition referred to above; and by the most authentic private accounts from that quarter, we are assured that the gloomy picture drawn in it of the present state of the town in question, and the same is the case with other places, is far from being overcharged."

PETITION FOR PEACE.

TO THE KING.

May it please your Majesty,

WE, your Majesty's most dutiful and affectionate subjects, the Merchants, Manufacturers, Traders, and other Inhabitants of Paisley and its Neighbourhood,

hood, humbly beg leave to approach your Majesty in the present awful and alarming crisis, to make known to your Majesty the multiplied grievances under which we labour—that we are at this moment languishing beneath the most heavy and distressing calamity, the terrible consequences of which, if not speedily remedied, no human comprehension can calculate, or pretend to set bounds to. We see with the deepest concern our trade ruined—public credit exhausted—every article of subsistence raised to an extravagant, and almost unprecedented price; and our commerce and manufactures, by which alone there could exist a possibility of supporting such accumulated hardships, shackled and sunk to wretchedness, while our country is bereaved of its blood, treasure and provisions, to feed and nourish the very Evil that threatens to complete its universal ruin. Emigrations from every quarter are daily taking place, and nothing deters vast numbers from abandoning their native country for ever, but want of means to carry them hence. Our long and expensive pursuits after those improvements, by which our manufactures had attained to such unrivalled perfection, have now been wasted in vain—thousands of industrious individuals, with their helpless families, deprived of every mean of subsistence, and reduced to the most pitiable and forlorn situation, are pining in hopeless poverty, without the most distant prospect of relief from the fast approaching horrors of absolute want.

Fully convinced that the present unhappy and ruinous War is the source of all these insupportable miseries—that nothing but the speedy re-establishment of Peace can ever restore our manufactures to the late prosperous and flourishing situation from which they were so unhappily precipitated, and when the sole avowed purpose, for which, on our part, hostilities were commenced, is now fully accomplished, when our enemies are driven from the

dominions of your Majesty's ally. Our manufactures and prosperity verging on ruin, and when nothing but a long, dismal period of bloodshed, desolation and expence, presents itself to our view, we cannot look forward without the utmost horror and alarm to the continuance of such dangerous and destructive measures—measures, we humbly apprehend, calculated only to swell the tide of human slaughter, to shut up every resource of trade and commerce, to weaken and dissolve that mutual affection, which alone can bind the subject to his sovereign, and to hurry to the most dreadful extremes a starving and desperate people.

We, therefore, your Majesty's most faithful subjects, deeply affected with these alarming prospects, and having no other hope of relief but from the humanity and benevolence which have ever resided in your royal bosom, humbly beg to lay this our distressed situation before your Majesty, as the kind friend and patron of your people: To implore your Majesty to take these melancholy truths into your merciful consideration—to have pity on the many thousands in this place, who are sinking under the most deplorable calamities; and, in your gracious wisdom to see meet, that a speedy conclusion may be put to the present lamentable war, the existing cause of all our sufferings; that the earth may no more be wantonly drenched with the blood of our fellow-subjects, but the terrible engines of destruction resigned for the more blessed instruments of peace—that our country may once more resume her former splendor and prosperity, and a grateful and affectionate nation perpetuate to posterity its Sovereign's timely and merciful interposition.

And your Petitioners, as in duty bound, shall ever pray.

☞ The following Paragraph, respecting the Glasgow Petition for Peace, appeared in the Morning Chronicle of August 16th, from which the Reader can

can judge of the candour and liberal conduct of a certain class of men on the present occasion. It is allowed a place here as a farther vindication of what is asserted in a note to that petition respecting the number and character of those who subscribed it.

"The Committee which conduct the Glasgow Petition for peace have published a statement, in which they convict their antagonists of calumny, so shameless as would make any one but an inquisitor blush. These worthy deputies of Mr. Reeves charged them with having given no intimation of their intention to petition but by anonymous hand-bills. The fact, however was, that application was first made to the Lord Provost, to summon a public meeting, *which he refused*: and the petition was afterwards advertised in the newspapers before any hand-bills were issued respecting it.

To put an end to all affected and pretended doubts respecting the sense of the majority of the people of Glasgow, the Friends of Peace have again offered to put it to the test of a public meeting; a challenge which the inquisitors thought fit to decline. The inquisitors even descended to the unavailing means of bribing the lowest agents employed in circulating the Petition, without being able to buy from them any colourable slander. More than one person who suborned or feigned signatures among so many thousands they have not ventured to mention; and he gives them the lie. But were the charge against him true, what would it amount to? Is the folly or villainy of one to defeat the exertions of thousands? The most corrupt governments have, in that case, an easy mode of suppressing the most clear and respectable expressions of the public voice. A Ministerial Agent has only to insinuate himself among the petitioners to commit frauds, *to take care that they shall be detected*, and their detection shall throw ignominy on all the other subscribers, and defeat the whole purpose of the Petition." To the above may we not add?

add? Is it not a little surprising that the professed disciples of the Prince of Peace, who pronounces the Peace-makers blessed, should be at such pains to avoid all imputation of having any hand in so good a work? To those who are thus indifferent about the effusion of human blood, the Most High may justly give blood to drink, having found them worthy. Tho' the sparing of the blood of Frenchmen should not be worth a wish; yet ought we to feel some compassion for our fellow subjects, and our Allied friends, myriads of whom may be yet sacrificed, should the unhappy contest be much longer protracted? Have we forgot the American war, and its consequences? *A righteous man is merciful to his beast.*

AN EXTRACT.

THE enlightened Mr Hall has the following judicious observations in his Apology for the freedom of the Press. "The real danger to every free government is less from its *enemies*, than from *itself*. Should it resist the most temperate Reforms, and maintain its abuses with obstinacy, imputing complaint to faction, calumniating its friends, and smiling on its flatterers; should it encourage informers, and hold out rewards to treachery, turning every man into a Spy, and every neighbourhood into the seat of an Inquisition, let it not hope it can conceal its Tyranny under the mask of Freedom. These are the avenues thro' which *despotism* must enter; these are the arts at which Integrity sickens, and Freedom turns pale!

The permanence of every government must depend upon opinion, a general persuasion of its excellence, which can never be increased by its assuming a vindictive and sanguinary aspect. While it is the object of the people's approbation it will be continued, and to support it much beyond that period, by mere *force and terror*, would be impossible were it just, and unjust were it possible. The law hath amply provided

provided against overt acts of sedition and disorder, and to suppress *mere opinions*, by any other method than reasoning and argument, is the height of *tyranny*. *Freedom of thought*, being intimately connected with the happiness and dignity of man, in every stage of his being, is of so much more importance than the preservation of any constitution, that to infringe the former, under pretence of improving the latter, is to sacrifice the means to the end.

When the public discontents are allowed to vent themselves in reasoning and discourse, they subside into a calm; but their confinement in the bosom, is apt to give them a fierce and deadly tincture. The reason of this is obvious. As men are seldom disposed to complain till they at least imagine themselves injured, so there is no injury which they will remember so long, or resent so deeply, as that of being threatened into *silence*. This seems like adding triumph to oppression, and insult to injury. The apparent tranquility which may ensue, is delusive and ominous; it is that *awful stillness* which nature feels, while she is awaiting the discharge of the gathered *tempest*. There is a buoyancy in the public mind, which the moment an unnatural pressure is removed, seldom fails to rise up with an *irresistible force*, and *terrible majesty*! It is the prerogative of one Being alone to "*hold the winds in his fist*!"

To the above just remarks may be added, that prosecutions for political disquisitions, under the character of sedition, is the direct way to produce the very thing they are intended to counteract and prevent. These engage the attention of the Public, excite a spirit of inquiry respecting the cause; and tho' the effect may not immediately appear, yet time will discover that they are the mean of sowing a seed which cannot long be smothered. The term sedition is vague and undefined, different persons affixing different ideas to it as may suit their own opinion or purpose. At present in Prussia, Germany
and

and Russia, to disapprove of and condemn the conduct of their respective Courts, in reference to Poland, will no doubt be counted sedition by those in power. The conduct of our forefathers in attempting a Revolution in 1688, would doubtless be accounted seditious in the extreme by the adherents of the exiled monarch, tho' their own folly and obstinacy brought matters to such a pass; but unluckily for them, by that time they were reduced to a comparatively small minority. In all states where a spirit of corruption and venality once unhappily prevails; every attempt to detect and expose them will be counted seditious by all those who live upon the spoils of the public, and their partisans; tho' these public vices have been ever found pernicious to national virtue and prosperity. For similar reasons, the preaching of the gospel, and the reprehension of vice, irreligion and atheism, is sedition in the ancient and extensive kingdom of Satan; and must meet the frown, and excite the most active efforts of his infernal majesty to counteract and suppress it. Hence the old cry of his agents, *these men that turn the world upside down, are come hither also*; and hence they were accused every where of sedition, and designs upon the government, like their master, when their only object was to enlighten and reform mankind.

FRIENDS AND COUNTRYMEN,

PERMIT me, before I conclude this Tract, to address a few things to you, to which the present awful crisis demands our attention. Whatever reception these sheets may find, and howsoever some may differ in opinion respecting the subjects animadverted on in them; yet they have some claim to a calm hearing, and should be rejected or received so far only as they

they disagree or agree with truth, justice and equity, to the decision of which they are submitted. The object principally in view was the accursed trade in Slaves, which is still unhappily carried on under the sanction of the British Legislature, to the increase of our national guilt and disgrace, and the acceleration of national judgments: but the inattention to that subject which now prevails, and the present alarming state of Europe, and our own nation, perhaps as a just punishment of that trade and our inattention to it, led to animadvert on other subjects. I am not conscious to myself of being actuated by one single motive in writing and publishing this tract, but what arose from a concern for the interests of virtue and religion, and the honour and continued prosperity of these lands, with which the honour and stability of the Throne, and of every branch of the Legislative and Executive administration, are inseparably connected. Should any call the truth of this in question, I would only say, It is a small thing to be judged of man's judgment, where the benevolence and uprightness of our motives are known to Him who has access to inspect the most latent springs of human action. To man belongs to judge only by outward appearance, or visible facts: but it is the prerogative of Heaven to search and judge the heart. Did I think publishing these sheets to the world could have any tendency contrary to that specified above, or inconsistent with it, I would be the first to commit them to the flames. The subjects treated of appeared interesting, peculiarly so in present circumstances, and it is thought will appear so to every one that views them with coolness and candor; for truth and wisdom will always approve themselves to their children when so viewed. May I be then allowed to express myself in the words of one who was once a member of the House of Commons†: "I claim the
" privilege

† John Trenchard, Esq; The Reader may see in a Collection of tracts by that gentleman, and a Thomas Gordon, Esq; one entitled

“ privilege of a free-born *Briton* to speak or write
 “ my mind impartially and openly, upon which my
 “ own or my Country’s Liberties are concerned,
 “ whilst there is no law to forbid me: and much
 “ more so, when what I have to say is in vindica-
 “ tion of the Laws and Constitution in being;” and
 I would add, in vindication of the laws, and moral
 government of the Almighty.

A mere politician traces public events, whether
 prosperous or adverse, only to their natural or se-
 condary causes: but a Christian is taught to rise
 higher in his views, and resolve them to the will and
 over-ruling providence of the Almighty Governor
 among the nations. The adverse events of that pro-
 vidence, he views as the chastisement of Heaven,
 justly incensed at human crimes. He sees in them a
 call to repentance, and, if not regarded and im-
 proved in this light, a prelude to misery and destruction.
 He is convinced, from the equity of the Divine ad-
 ministration, the express declarations of Scripture,
 and the history of mankind in every age, that national
 sins will infallibly procure national calamities;—
 convinced that tho’ Heaven may long exercise pa-
 tience towards a disobedient and rebellious people,
 that yet the period of retribution will come, when a-
 bused patience shall give place to the dread execution
 of justice, awfully incensed in consequence of for-
 mer lenity and respite. Are there not signs of the
 times, as our Divine Lord terms them, which an-
 nounce the near approach of this, if not its actual
 accomplishment in part? That a people may arrive
 at such a stage of vice and infidelity as to make them
 blind to, or disregardful of these signs, appears but
 too

titled *Standing Armies inconsistent with a Free Government*, and
 also a short History of Standing Armies in England and their ef-
 fects; how they gradually arose from a few Life-guards to their
 present formidable state, and were often the instrument of despotic
 power in oppressing the people. The author had not seen these
 tracts till after he had wrote his thoughts on standing armies, &c.
 page 183.

too evident from the conduct of the Egyptians in the days of Moses, and of the Jews in the time of Jeremiah, and towards the period of the final overthrow of their polity by the Roman armies. Other nations have trode in their steps, till involved in a similar fate; and is there no reason to fear that Britain is at this day copying the fatal example? At no time are a people nearer ruin than when most secure; or least apprehensive of their guilt and danger.

To form a proper estimate of our moral character and prospects as a nation, it would be necessary to advert to our national privileges, and our national sins; the deliverances wrought for us as a people, and the returns we have made. Our privileges have been great and numerous, and at the same time of long continuance, perhaps beyond any other nation under Heaven; and the deliverances wrought for us in Providence have been seasonable, important, and more in number than can be recounted. Let any say if we have made suitable returns, if we have been careful to abstain from that abominable thing sin which God hates, and to practise that righteousness which exalteth a nation. We have been also often visited with national chastisements; yet have despised the chastening of the Lord, and lent a deaf ear to his solemn admonitions and reproofs. At this moment he is pleading an awful controversy with us, and yet how few are laying it to heart, or ascribing it to the proper cause? When we are engaged in a war with a powerful nation, which hath already well nigh ruined our commerce, and brought want and wretchedness on thousands, lately in comfortable circumstances; a war which is daily adding to the serious load of our national debt, and sending myriads of the human race unprepared to eternity, while none can presume to define the consequences; is not all this to be viewed as a token of the Lord's displeasure against Britain on account of our sins? What is the cause of all the discontent, divisions, and animosities

ties that take place among us, particularly in respect to the interests of the Public at large, and the management of their affairs? What the prophet saith, seems verified at present in our nation; "Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire: no man shall spare his brother," Isa. 9. 19. And there is much reason to fear that what another prophet adds may be too applicable to ourselves; "The time is come, the day draweth near, let not the buyer rejoice, nor the seller mourn: for wrath is upon all the multitude thereof," Ezek. 7. 12.; that is, upon all ranks and descriptions of men in the nation: because all have sinned, corrupted their ways, and offended the Lord their God. May not such as have understanding, and their Christian senses exercised in any measure, discern in the signs of the times awful tokens of God's anger appearing against us as a nation, and body politic? for the dispensations of Divine providence, whatever some may flatter themselves and others, bear at present a very melancholy and threatening aspect towards these lands. That such apprehensions are not the mere result of chimerical fears must appear too evident from the most superficial survey of our public conduct; if we take reason, scripture, and the experience of other nations for our guide.

Tho' it hath become fashionable of late to decry *French atheism*†, and reproach a whole people on account

† That profanity and Atheism are not wholly of foreign growth, and to be found no where but among our old enemies the French, appears from too many specimens of these among ourselves. The Public have been lately assured, thro' the channel of our newspapers, that the magistrates of one of our principal towns, which used to be noted for regard to religion and decency of manners, had appointed a band of singers to perform in their presence that prostituted air—"God save the King," immediately after Divine service, in the place devoted to public worship!! Many who sat silent while their Maker's praise was sung, were observed to join with alacrity in the chorus, as if loyalty to their Prince required con-

count of it; can we say that all ranks with us are exemplary for a due regard to the institutions of religion both in public and in private? How do many, especially

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tempt of their God. Is this polite and loyal reformation? for in this mode many who would be counted people of note and fashion, and the best affected to their King and Country, shew themselves disposed to attempt reform; tho', by the bye, this is aping the atheistical French pretty well! What a daring insult to the King of heaven in a place appropriated to his service! Will our King, in his person, family and government, reap much benefit from a prayer thus presented by unhallowed lips, allowing the suppliants to be the very paragons of loyalty, if loyalty can dwell with treason against God? But the prayers and imprecations of some are equally efficacious, with regard to their objects, tho' both contribute to their own destruction.

The sons of infidelity and pride have their own way of expressing their loyalty; and well for them could we say, ~~but for this~~ they have not access to know better. Can we view these magistrates as the guardians of the laws of Heaven, and an ornament and blessing to their country, who can authorise and witness the prostitution of a Divine ordinance to the praise of a fellow mortal, be he ever so great and respectable, and that at a time and place which must enhance the aggravation? Hath not God said that he will not give his glory to another, that he is jealous of his honour? It was when Herod was celebrated as a god, and deemed pleased with the incense, that Heaven avenged him ~~in a moment~~ by a loathsome and incurable disease; ~~for says~~ the sacred historian, "Immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten up of worms, and gave up the ghost." The death of many a haughty worm may be owing to a similar cause. How soon can God degrade the most dignified of mortals! and what a lesson to all sycophants to beware how they encroach on the honours of Deity in their fulsome adulation of those in power? When subjects convert their prayers for kings and those in authority into gross flatteries, and profane praises, or into frothy mirth and unmeaning compliments over their cups; tho' this may pass current for loyalty among men, and secure the favour of the objects of their servile praises, we venture to say, it is the direct way to bring down the wrath of Heaven both on them, and the land over which they preside.

If we have been bad prior to our engaging in this war, as a proof that we are not growing better since, tho' our affairs both at home and abroad wear a very serious aspect, we need only advert to what the London papers have assured us, namely, that the 11th current, being the Lord's day, was wholly taken up in embarking from Woolwich, stores, cannon, powder, &c. for attacking Dunkirk! Perhaps we think, according to the common proverb, *the*

better

especially in the higher circles, treat the name, the day, and the worship of that God who made and upholds them? What can we think of those who are perpetually exclaiming against irreligion and atheism in others, and telling us that our holy religion is in extreme danger from French principles; while themselves are perhaps known to profane the name of God, turn their back upon his sanctuary, treat domestic and personal devotion with contempt, and give a loose rein to their worst passions? All are atheists in the sight of God who in works deny him; and such atheists abound every where even in Britain. Can they once suppose he will be thus mocked, and that they shall not hereafter reap as they now sow? Is an oath regarded among us as a solemn appeal to Deity, and never administered without obvious necessity? Are those who make such appeals, always careful to make them *in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness*, as God requires; persuaded he will not hold those guiltless who in any form take his name in vain? Heaven knows, and Britain shall infallibly know in the day of visitation, how much the very reverse is the case. Are our young people

better day, the better deed. The growing profanation of that portion of our time which ought to be deemed sacred to God, and devoted to his service, and the gross contempt and prostitution of the ordinances of religion, which are to be seen every where, especially in the higher ranks of life, afford a sad symptom of our deep degeneracy, and a dread presage of our approaching ruin. How consistent then our exclamations against French atheism!

But are our allies better qualified, and more entitled to act the part of Heaven's executioners, in punishing those who are infected with this contagious disease? Have not the papers also told us, that on the first Lord's day after taking Valenciennes, Prince de Cobourg gave orders for mass to be said in the forenoon, and a play to be acted in the afternoon? Are these the men whom the God of heaven will delight to honour? But they will perhaps plead, that he will doubtless give them a toleration to combine the synagogue and service of Satan, with his own temple and worship, and that even on his own day, as a reward of their zeal against French atheism and irreligion. Can men commit no treason against Heaven? or is this confined to a certain description?

ple of both sexes noted for purity of manners, and sobriety of conduct? Do the wedded of all ranks exemplify the duties of conjugal fidelity and affection? Alas! the records of Doctors Commons can testify that our males are not all Josephs, nor our females so many virtuous Lucretias. Are our forces by sea and land the ornament, defence and bulwark of our Isle, in point of true honour, virtue and piety, as well as in respect of martial courage and prowess? Too many circumstances concur to prove, that the very reverse is notoriously the fact. All the black catalogues of sins, against which the wrath of God is denounced in his word, and hath been often revealed from heaven in his Providence, are to be found among us, attended with peculiar aggravations.

Of the poor, what vast multitudes are sunk in ignorance and vice, drinking up iniquity as the thirsty ox drinketh up the water! But should we say with the prophet, *surely these are poor, they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God. I will get me unto the great men: for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God: may we not add with him? but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds; Jer. 5. 4, 5; Yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass.* What guilt have we contracted in our foreign dependencies, which is not forgotten before God? Both the Eastern and Western regions of the world can bear witness to our crimes, and their calamitous effects. Our long and deep concern in the Slave trade—a trade in its every stage replete with enormous guilt and disgrace, and now peculiarly aggravated, is laid up among the treasures of the Almighty against the day of battle and war. The rejection of the Bill brought lately into Parliament, to prevent in future our supplying foreign markets with slaves, hath filled up the measure of our iniquity on this head; and, we have reason to fear, determined Him to avenge the wrongs of that

oppressed people more immediately by himself, when the transgressors in that traffic, and all that take part with them, shall find it a fearful thing to fall into the hands of that God with whom is terrible majesty. Of this we may rest as fully assured, as tho' we saw his vengeance already executed upon them: for he is a God of truth and justice, and is not slack concerning his threatenings, as some men count. Thence, and from capital crimes at home, such as Duels and Child-murder, being suffered to pass unpunished, the land is polluted with blood; and the God of truth hath declared, that it cannot be purged but with blood, Num. 35. 33. In all the wars in which we have been engaged, have we added nothing, in this respect, to the long-accumulating load of our national guilt? Are we sure that Heaven is at present on our side, and that the blood shed in this war shall not be found, in the day of inquisition for it, in our skirts? If it is not absolutely necessary to the preservation of our lives, liberties and property, or can be terminated with safety to these, the consequences to these lands will one day be terrible; whence we may weep over the success of our arms, and those of our allies. One thing is ominous. We are leagued with some of God's greatest avowed enemies on earth, powers that have been often drunk with the blood of his saints; and for whom is reserved a day of awful retribution. Even good king Jehoshaphat of old was made to smart for joining in league, and going to war with Ahab, an idolatrous prince. It is a scripture aphorism, *a companion of fools, or wicked men, shall be destroyed.* It would not be more falacious than dangerous to construe any partial advantages we may gain over that nation into a token of the Divine approbation of our conduct, and the cause in which we are embarked, and a prelude to a final triumph; for it is more than probable they are only paving the way for a more disastrous and mortifying defeat. No doubt, God may so far employ the forces at present combined

combined against France, to chastise that nation for their sins; yet may he also make use of that very nation, irreligious and atheistical as they are, to plead his controversy with their enemies; for, without a peradventure, these are not all his friends and loyal subjects. Allowing the wickedness of that people to be every whit as great as the greatest of their enemies are willing to believe; yet Heaven may employ them to punish us for our sins, especially because we have been accustomed to import their worst vices, and copy their greatest levities. Have we not been long in use to adopt from France their Deistical principles, and give them the right hand of fellowship in practice? These, with all their extravagant fopperies, fashions and fooleries we tenaciously retain, and that at the very moment we are at war with them, and they are led to reflect, and in a great measure abandon the latter. Having so long made them our pattern in guilt, is it not just with God to make them our scourge? And indeed we have much more to dread from French manners, long since naturalized in our isle, than from their arms, formidable as these are, or even from the influence of their modern principles.

If we have no better security for the continued favour of the Almighty, than the wickedness of our enemies, be that ever so great, and our pretensions to superior worth and piety ever so strong and oft repeated, we are building our hopes but on the sand. What can it avail us in the day of trouble and moment of danger, that we *profess to know God*, and revere his infinite Majesty, if yet *in works we deny him*? It merits our attention, that it was not by nations who feared God, but by wicked and idolatrous Heathens, that he of old chastised his professing people; for such were the Philistines, the Syrians, the Chaldeans and Romans. “ For they provoked him
 “ to anger with their high places, and moved him
 “ to jealousy with their graven images. So that he
 “ delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory

“ into

“ into the enemies hand. He gave his people over
 “ also unto the sword: and was wroth with his inheritance.” The tribe of Benjamin were very profligate and abandoned, when the Most High gave direction to the other tribes to make war upon them, respecting the affair of the Levite’s concubine; and yet, notwithstanding their superior strength and number, they were twice routed before them with great slaughter, because they too had provoked him by their sins. But you know how fatally to the former the contest terminated.

We boast of our power, our national character, our constitution, our commerce, our wealth, the valour and prowess of our troops, and particularly of our naval force; but our glorying in these is not good; for *pride, said the wisest of mere men, goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit, before a fall.* When Babylon said, *I sit as a queen, and shall see no sorrow*, her total overthrow commenced. How soon can the mighty Potentate of the universe humble our Fleets and Armies, in which we are so prone to glory, and indeed every sublunary prop of human trust; or employ them to the greater aggravation of our misery! How easily can he send messengers among them and us, which no human power can arrest, impeach, confine, amerce, or exile! To Him there is no Invincible Armada; for if he give commission to his winds, they sink as lead amidst the devouring waves. If a people’s ways please the Lord, he will make their enemies to solicit peace with them; or should they invade them, “ give them as the dust to their sword, and as driven stubble to their bow.” But should they provoke him to depart, and to appear against them, he can make one to chase a thousand, and two to put ten thousand to flight, as he somewhere threatens. *And what will ye do (says he) in the day of visitation? to whom will ye flee for help? Without me they shall bow under the prisoners, and they shall fall under the slain. As a bowing wall shall ye*

be, and as a tottering fence. When the Lord shall stretch out his hand, both he that helpeth shall fall, and he that is holpen shall fall down, and they shall fall together. Were these things duly regarded, our ears would not be so often stunned, nor our hearts grieved by such atheistical gasconading as hath currently appeared among us in the crisis of danger. Such a conduct is not more insulting to Heaven, than pernicious to ourselves. A proper view of the superintending providence of God would preserve from such vain and arrogant boasting, and the guilt and disappointment resulting from it. "Whofo is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord:" "But because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hands, he shall destroy them, and not build them up."

If the character given of the Jews in the days of Ezekiel, apply to ourselves as a nation, what can we expect but that a righteous God should award to us their doom? "The iniquity of the house of Israel and Judah is exceeding great, and the land is full of blood, and the city full of perverseness: for they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not. And as for me also, mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity, but I will recompence their way upon their head." "Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" Is it more than possible that to all the blood already on our land, we are adding that shed on both sides in the present unhappy war? The very thought is alarming; but *the Judge of all the earth will do right*, in the day when he makes inquisition for it: for he seeth not as man seeth. Both a nation and individuals may be exposed to the wrath of God, or lying directly under it, and yet neither apprehend nor feel it for a season: but if they still continue impenitent, they will be made to feel it at last; for *it shall fall with*

with pain on the head of the wicked. They may for a time remain secure, slight the plainest reproofs and admonitions, and despise the most awful threatenings denounced against them in and from the word of God: yet the time is at hand when they shall be roused effectually, and fearfulness shall surprise them; for "the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries; and reserveth wrath for his enemies, whom darkness shall pursue." Tho' "slow to anger, he will not at all acquit the wicked," who persist in rebellion against him. "Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire." Nah. i. Except we repent, we must inevitably perish. It is only by taking shelter under the covert of Messiah's blood and righteousness, and reforming our ways that we can hope the Lord will be favourable to our land, forgive our iniquity as a nation; "turn from the fierceness of his anger, and take away all his wrath!" Without this, what can we expect, but that God should plead a controversy with us, till it issue in desolation or utter destruction? Oh, that sinful nations and individuals would lay this timely to heart!

It shall however be well with the righteous, who shall be hid in God's pavilion in evil days. "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations" or trials, "and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished"—which day sometimes overtakes them on earth, but infallibly shall in the world to come. For the comfort of those that fear God, in the prospect of temporal calamities, we are assured that "The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and he knoweth," that is approveth and regardeth, "them that trust in him."

The Author hath in another Production, to which this may be viewed as a Supplement, attempted to point out to his Countrymen what we have reason as

a nation to apprehend from our abounding sins, and our contempt of religion, and also tendered to them his most friendly admonitions. He is not a little sorry now to observe the black clouds, which he then saw collecting at a distance, thick condensing over our heads, in all appearance pregnant with such a dreadful storm as speedy repentance and interposing mercy alone can avert. In whatever manner his fellow subjects may regard such seasonable admonitions, he appeals to God, our immediate Witness, and common Judge, that he hath, according to the measure of grace vouchsafed him, given faithful warning in his name. He has borne testimony for Heaven against abounding iniquity, and doubts not but Heaven will sustain the attempt, and secure to him the heart-felt satisfaction of having in that instance done his duty, let his Countrymen hear or forbear. While he forewarned of the approaching evil day, he daily deprecates it, and would rejoice to see our public and private conduct such as to promise a lengthening out of our tranquility. "Behold, the Lord cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain." His judgments are already abroad in the earth, but are we thence learning righteousness, and waiting for him in the way of his judgments? In our prevailing vices, and in the temper which we discover in our present very alarming situation, we may see the awful harbingers of deserved judgments. They are more than blind who will not perceive this, and worse than obstinate that will not acknowledge it. But such as will not see and hear when God threatens, be they high or low, rich or poor, rulers or ruled, shall be made to feel when he smites, and to justify him when he speaketh in wrath, and clear him when he judgeth. *Many sorrows shall be to the wicked: but they that trust in the Lord, mercy shall compass them about. He shall break them*

then with a rod of iron, he shall dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little: blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

What a serious prospect does a rupture with America at this moment present†! Setting aside the additional

† The Author hath expressed his fears, page 236, written some time ago, that America would ere long become a party in the present war, if not speedily terminated; and indeed any person of common penetration might have foreseen this, upon the supposition the war was protracted. To a rupture with us and Spain, in present circumstances, America hath the strongest temptation, besides gratitude to France for former favours: for Canada and our West Indian islands will in all probability be her reward on the one hand, and the disjunction of South America from Spain on the other; which must be ripe for a revolt, considering how grievous and despotic the Spanish yoke hath in that quarter been. Such an event must prove as ruinous to the power and commerce of Britain, as it will serve to enrich and aggrandize America and her Ally.

Many were lately lavish of their tender of life and fortune to support the measures of ministry; but their fortune, embarked in such a vessel, may soon suffer shipwreck, if it has not done it already, and should our too just fears, as above expressed, be realised, they will not soon, or easily repair it. Their forward zeal is too likely to cost their King and Country dear—to render the present period conspicuous in the annals of the British history. If to express our fears and regret on this head, be construed into sedition; of what sedition and treason are they guilty, who advise to measures that too apparently tend to degrade their King and Country, and yet refuse to be admonished, as if they and they alone had the honour and happiness of these at heart! Hard fate! to be charged with the worst of crimes, for presuming to complain of such measures as appear fraught with destruction to our Trade and Territory, our King and Country! Can we be loyal subjects, and yet remain unconcerned respecting the fate of these?

Lord North's administration is memorable in the history of our Country, for the loss of America, for the slaughter of at least 200,000 of our fellow creatures on their side and ours, and for incurring an immense national debt; and should the adopted measures proceed much longer, the ministry and their friends may immortalize the present reign, by the loss of all our other foreign dependencies, even Ireland not excepted; whence, instead of continuing

ditional effusion of human blood which it may occasion, a consideration too little regarded by the politicians of the world, will not this, in all likelihood, annihilate what remains of our foreign trade and territory? Will not this do us a more material injury than all our combined Allies can do us good? Our Enemies are united by mutual interest, and a sameness of political principles, and at the same time animated by the enthusiasm of Liberty: but our Allies

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lies

tinuing to be Great Britain, we may unhappily become quite the reverse. If there is any ground for such apprehensions, do not the measures of the day, and their probable result, evince the necessity of reform, which will however, in all probability, come too late to remedy their unhappy consequences? Some who own the extreme need of this, make themselves easy by alledging, that the present system may make a shift to support itself and the nation all their days; and let posterity see to themselves: but herein they may find themselves miserably mistaken, unless their days be very few; for our commerce, and of course our revenue, are already gone, probably not to be soon, if ever, restored to their former state; and without these, no government can be strong, or permanent. Whatever the minister, and his friends and contemporaries may think of the matter, Posterity will not deem it a recommendation of his character, that he should be solemnly denounced by the representatives of twenty-five millions of people, as *An enemy to the human species*.

The following extract from Luther's epistle to Princes appeared in some of our public papers, as conveying a seasonable admonition to the present ruling powers. "The people are stirred up on every side, and have opened their eyes, they will not, they cannot be overpowered by force. It is the Lord who does these things, and conceals from the eyes of Princes the dangers that threaten them; nay, he will forward them by their blindness and violence, so that I think I behold Germany swimming in blood. It is a matter of serious consequence that presses on us; while foolish Princes regard not the cause of the People, so they can but accomplish their own mad purposes, and gratify their inveterate animosities. I wish that Princes would decree and act with more modesty and without violence; let them consider that the people are not now what they have hitherto been; and let them know that the sword of their subjects (*Gladium domesticum*) most assuredly hangs over their heads." The friendly, tho' uncourtly admonition of this great and good man is expressed in a manner that would be now deemed seditious, if not treasonable, especially the last clause; yet we no where learn that he was ever prosecuted on account of it. *The righteous, confiding in his God and in the goodness of his cause, is bold as a lion.*

lies are united only by the spur of the moment, without any cordial concern for each others prosperity; nay, do not past facts and experience give reason to believe some of them would rejoice in our ruin, and, did circumstances favour them, grasp at part of our territory with as much eagerness, as they seize and partition that of Poland? Let the candid and impartial judge what we have to hope for from such friends, and to dread from such enemies. The beginning of strife or war, is like the breaking in of water. To oppose its progress may at first be easy, but permitted to proceed a certain length, it baffles all opposition, and carries every thing before it. He that sets bounds to the swelling deep, alone can say to the flames of war once kindled, hitherto shall ye come, and no farther, and here shall all your violence be stayed. Men may kindle these flames, and furnish them with fuel; but God alone can quench them, and that he sometimes does in the blood of the guilty, of which they should beware.

I have thus, Friends and Countrymen, suggested a word in season to you, which I pray Heaven may succeed with power, and impress on our hearts, that it prove not worse than in vain. Permit me to conclude with the salutary counsel, and solemn caution of a true Patriot, addressed to the children of Israel, but no less applicable to us in present circumstances: "Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with
" all your heart: for consider how great things he
" hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your
" king," 1 Sam. 12. 24, 25.

A SEASONABLE ADMONITION.

ONCE God did plead an injur'd people's cause,
While haughty Egypt felt his vengeful wrath;
Let those beware, who break th' Eternal's laws,
Who men oppress,—and scatter woes on earth.

As

As Judge of all, he views with equal eye
The deeds of men in ev'ry age and clime;
And guilt draws down due vengeance from the Sky,
Which shall o'ertake, nor fail to strike in time.

Of Pharaoh's course, O Britons, now beware,
While God demands that you poor slaves release,
Men's rights revere, lest he soon cease to spare,
Who them can rescue, and you crush with ease†.

In that proud despot, view oppressors' fate,
Whom Heav'n reserves for a thrice dreadful doom;
For woes eternal on that race await,
Not seldom hurry'd to an early tomb.

Be timely wise, cease in such steps to tread,
For nature's Lord is still the mighty same;
His word obey, and his displeasure dread,
Lest by your plagues his justice he proclaim.

Beware, ye Britons, lest your foes increase,
Your Guardian God deny his needful aid;
Lest when too late, you prize the means of peace‡,
From your proud summit in debasement laid.

Pursue not war, lest war your ruin prove,
Whose arts destructive serve the cause of hell;
A God of peace is the great Pow'r above,
Who cherish war must their own mis'ries swell.

Tho' earthly pow'rs should with you all conspire,
If you decline in virtue's paths to tread,
These ne'er can screen from the Almighty's ire,
Our Ally he, what foes have we to dread?

What state can prosper having Him their foe,
Their sinful manners calling forth his ire?
Ye Britons, view Mizraim's tenfold woe,
Whose wealth and sons consum'd he as with fire.

If you can spurn his yoke, transgress his laws,
His grace, and his forbearance not improve,

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† Let the dealers in the Slave trade, and their partisans view, in the late calamities and present state of St Domingo, the displeasure of Heaven against it, and what they have reason in the course of holy Providence to dread.

‡ Depart from evil: seek peace and pursue it. KING DAVID,

Can you suppose, he will not plead his cause,
Ner visit guilt from his high throne above?

Remember, Heav'n retains a vengeful rod,
Tho' slow to strike, yet shall not still forbear;
To smite the poor is treason against God,
Prepare to meet Him, soon shall He appear.

O Thou! by whom our King and Rulers reign,
Who hast their hearts and councils in thy hand,
To Freedom's cause their will obedient gain,
And save from measures that may doom our land!

Avert, in mercy, Britain's earned fate,
In ruin's paths permit us not to tread;
Our Island bless, restore our prosp'rous state,
Nor let th'oppress'd in vain for justice plead!

TO THE PUBLIC.



Throughout the whole of this Performance, the Reader will find such a train of remarks as the subjects under consideration suggested, expressed with that unsuspicious plainness and freedom which a conviction of truth, and of a right intentions, and a concern for the honour and happiness of one's King and Country, are calculated to inspire, without having recourse to that caution and ambiguity which, in despotic countries, are employed to elude the jealous eye of inquisitorial power, having had no apprehensions from that quarter in an enlightened land of liberty. The subject that expresses his sentiments freely, and candidly, either on religion or politics, bears honourable testimony to the wisdom and equity of the government under which he lives. That he has always expressed himself in the most accurate and unexceptionable manner, he does not pretend; for many things may need that candor and favourable construction, which every human production claims, and the candid will be always disposed to give.

Tho' the Author was induced not to prefix his name, leaving what appeared to him to be founded on truth and equity, to speak for itself, which might be thought to
have

have led sometimes to express himself with less reserve: yet is he not conscious of having advanced any thing unbecoming the Christian character and that of a loyal subject. The cause which he has, in his feeble measure, endeavoured to plead and support, he is persuaded, on the most mature reflection, is the cause not only of his King and Country, but of Heaven itself, that will not always remain an unconcerned spectator; and that, when properly understood, it must be so viewed. If what he has advanced be agreeable to the dictates of Truth and Justice, to the verdict of which he refers the whole, let these plead for him: if not, he is willing to stand corrected, persuaded truth, and not forcible measures, is to be opposed to speculative errors or mistakes. He knows no law, human or divine, that he has transgressed by his animadversions on public measures, which, like a city set on a hill, cannot be hid; and if he have Truth and Heaven on his side, he may be less concerned who should happen to be against him. He appeals to the judgment of his Country, whose honour, peace and prosperity, with the honour and happiness of the present reigning Family, he has had always at heart, as Heaven knows, and his public and private conduct can attest: for these engage his cordial wishes and daily prayers, and to promote them, he would not count his liberty, his property, or even his very life, dear to him.

Is it possible for a mind, possessed of the least sensibility, closely to review certain subjects, and not express itself with warmth and feeling? but this, so far from being a crime, is a virtue: for, saith an apostle, it is good to be zealously affected in a good thing. Where the glory of God, the happiness of our fellow creatures, and the honour and prosperity of our Country are, or appear to be concerned, as in fact is the case in the Slave trade, and other subjects animadverted on in this Tract, not to feel, would be a crime, little short of treason against our common Nature, our Country, and our God, the great Father of all; and whoever would forbid us to feel, or express our feelings and apprehensions on these subjects, would in effect libel them all. What lover of his King

and Country can view measures, which appear to him calculated eventually to ruin both, and have already had that effect in other instances, and yet remain indifferent and unconcerned? Such as view these in a different light, may enjoy their own opinion, but have no right to persecute those who feel themselves obliged to be of another mind. The Author hath all along expressed his sentiments of public measures, and their tendency, as they came in course, as to wise and honest men, who feel for their Country's welfare, soliciting only a candid hearing; and it is their province to form a corresponding judgment. If what he hath urged be found evil, or justly censurable, let them bear witness of the evil: but if found agreeable to fact, equity, and the laws and constitution of his Country, as solemnly ratified at the Revolution, and, what is still more, agreeable to the unalterable laws of the God of Heaven, no Power on earth can possess a legal right to molest, far less condemn him.

The Reader needs scarce be told that the late prosecutions of some, for presuming to express their opinion of public measures, and their too apparent tendency, tho' such conduct might originate from a warm concern for the prosperity of the Nation, have led to the above observations, and indeed to subjoin this paper. Can we view the present disastrous state of Poland, and look forward to a state of hostilities with America, and their probable consequences, and yet feel no jealousy respecting our own liberties, our safety and continued prosperity and independence as a State; while our intimate coalition and co-operation with the Powers concerned in the shameful seizure and partition of that ill-fated Country, seem to bespeak our approbation of that measure, and while that measure is so fraught with danger to the liberties and very existence of other states? But the time of their visitation draweth nigh, and the day of retribution makes haste, when God shall distribute sorrows to his enemies, in anger and in fury, and in furious rebukes. When states make war amidst debts, funds, mortgages, as Mr Hume remarks; and may we not add, amidst ruined commerce and increasing discontents, the consequence

quence must resemble that of a cudgel match in a china shop? Yet in such a situation do the states of Europe at present wage an impolitic and unpopular war. If it be not so, if we and our Allies have justice on our side, may Heaven that holds the scale of empire determine in our favour! but if the cause on our side be unjust in its commencement, or continuance, may we be timely convinced that the blood shed in it will be found in our skirts, when God, according to his threatening, shall make inquisition for blood.

In fine, should this Publication, so far as the Author is immediately concerned, be thought by competent judges to contain any thing of a seditious nature, the verdict of Reason, Equity and Scripture being admitted, he pledges himself openly to avow it, not once shrinking from a judicious investigation, leaving consequences to Heaven.

FINIS.

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